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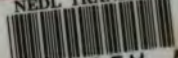
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STORIES  
FOR  
LITTLE FOLKS























**FRAU LUNA. Page 13.**

# OTTALIE'S STORIES

FOR THE

## LITTLE FOLKS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

MADAME OTTALIE WILDERMUTH,

BY

ANNA B. COOKE.



BOSTON:

E. P. DUTTON AND COMPANY.

NEW YORK: HURD AND HOUGHTON.

1866.

KC 18579





# Frau Luna,

AND HER

## VOYAGES.

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## FRAU LUNA.

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AR, far from the Fatherland, in the distant North, there stands yet a lonely castle. It is on the very top of a steep rock that rises suddenly out of the sea, and at the foot, and on the side, the waters rush and roar and dash about, as if the waves were trying to rouse each other to greater fury. The castle looks so solitary and desolate that it is hard to believe it inhabited by human beings: owls and bats make their nests in the old turrets, and a small stream near it is sometimes quite choked up with decaying vegetation, while high grass grows on the battlements.

One side of the old castle faces the sea: on the other is a thick, dark forest; but not far off glitters a little bay, of which the waters are smooth and sparkling, and

look like a beautiful watery mirror. At a window which looked out upon this bright sheet there stood once a tiny, fair-haired child, who looked as though she had fallen from the clouds into this cheerless solitude. It was little Gerda, who lived here in the most profound seclusion.

To be sure, her father and several servants were with her in the old castle, and among them Zutte, an old woman whose business it was to see that she was properly fed, clothed, and taken care of; but the rest of the servants were all men, and they and her father often went away and stayed whole days and nights, — “engaged in the chase,” as Zutte said. When they came back, they feasted and drank in the old hall, and sang wild songs until Gerda was quite afraid of them: sometimes she did not even see her father for a whole week. Zutte, too, was always busy somewhere where the little girl could not come; she had so much to do! And even when she sat in the room with her distaff, and spun, she was silent and grave.

So little Gerda was always alone; and

never was a child more lonesome, for she had no toys, not even a rag doll. For hours at a time she sat upon the stone seats of the deep windows, and listened to the voices of the waves as they dashed against the rocks, or the roar of the wind as it moaned through the forest. Sometimes she looked far away over the waters, as far as her eye could reach, to see the gulls and the sea-mews flying farther still : she could not help thinking that behind all this sea there was more sea still, and more still behind that again, as far as anybody could go.

She used very often to slip into the great hall on the side of the castle towards the sea, where she could hear more plainly the waves beat upon the rocks below ; and once, one very stormy night, when the sobbing of the wind and the roar and dash of the water were much louder than usual, and Zutte was nowhere to be seen, she grew afraid to stay in the great room all alone, and went into the large hall, where she knew there were people, for she heard them talking. It was her father and the servants, but no one took the least notice of the little girl, so she sat

down in a warm corner. They were all busy in hanging out of the hall-window a large, brightly burning lantern.

“What are you doing, Hans?” asked little Gerda of one of the men as he passed her.

“We are lighting the poor ships that are out on the sea this dark night,” replied Hans with a grinning smile.

Gerda thought that was very right, and felt a great deal better on account of it than she had done before. Then the servants and her father left the room : she heard them go down the stone steps that led to the sea ; then she heard guns, then the sound of human voices, and soon afterwards a fearful cry. The storm and the waves roared much more loudly than usual, but amid all she fancied she heard moanings and cries of distress : she was afraid to stay longer where she was, and yet she dared not rise to go away.

Just then Zutte came running into the great hall. “Quick, child, quick! Away, as fast as you can! What are you doing here? This is no place for you!” And she

took her up in her arms, carried her off to her little room, and put her to bed.

Gerda heard heavy steps mounting the stone stairs. "Zutte, tell me, what is that? Did n't the poor people in the ship see the light? Who was it cried out so?"

"Hush! little one; hush!" said old Zutte, fearfully and anxiously. "Say your prayers. Say 'Our Father' while you can! I can't — I'm afraid — any more!" and she looked frightened.

Poor little Gerda had never been taught to pray; she had never learned that the dear God would listen to all her little words of love and thankfulness, and send a holy angel to watch beside her bed, so that nothing should hurt her: she had been taught to repeat the words, and old Zutte said that to go to bed without repeating them was naughty; so, as she did not want to be naughty, she whispered the words she did n't understand, and then fell asleep, wondering what dreadful thing was happening, and if it would hurt her.

After that night she never again ventured into the great hall; but often when the

storm raged and the wind blew fiercely, she again fancied she heard that cry of agony as she heard it that night. Then she would creep, with a shudder, under the bed-clothes, and repeat the only prayer she knew. The poor little girl could not have told, if she had been asked, why she said the prayer then, for she had not the least idea of what she was doing; but she found that whenever she did, no matter how great her fear, she at once began to feel safer and more calm; so she thought that that was the reason why Zutte, whenever there was trouble, always bade her say her prayers: and after them (or it), she always fell into a sweet sleep.

Gerda very seldom went down the stairs; and although from the window she breathed freely the strong, bracing sea-breeze, her cheek was pale and blanched; but her blue eyes were clear as stars; she bloomed amid those wild men like a white sea-lily, and there was no one to rejoice in her beauty. Now and then her father took her upon his knee, and looked into her eyes, and stroked her gentle face, and said, —

"Wait, little one, till you're a little older, and you shall see the world beyond the old castle."

She was not a merry child, like others of her age ; she had never played in her life. Once, Zutte, who pitied the lonely, solitary child, took her by the hand and led her down the stairs that led to another great room below. "Here," said she, "you poor little goosie ! play with these ; only don't set your heart on them."

A wonderful play-room was this, only that Gerda hardly knew where to begin to amuse herself. Along the walls stood casks and boxes, bales of rich stuffs of all sorts, but none of any value to the little girl ; there were tools and instruments too, for these she cared nothing either ; then there were plenty of the most richly colored birds, but these were all dead and stuffed ; and there were corals, and pearls, and chains, and ornaments of gold, and beautiful glittering shells, larger a great deal and far more lovely than those that she and Zutte sometimes picked up along the shore of the sea.

Gerda knew too little of the outer world

to be able to amuse herself, as other children would have done, by imagining scenes full of men and women, such as she saw every day ; all she did know was just as much as she saw from the window, — sea and sky, — for it was seldom indeed that she was allowed even a walk through the thick forest on the land side ; and as her lively little brain must imagine something, she sketched for herself scenes in which these pearls, and corals, and sea-shells played an active part. The sea was the most prominent object that she knew of in the world ; and it was from the sea that these beautiful shells came, — so she made believe she was seated in the largest of them, about to launch out into the waves to whose roar she was even then listening. She hung a piece of black cloth upon the wall, and fastened to it the rings and jewels she found ; and this was to be the sky, overhanging the sea on which she sailed. She could not help thinking what a great big sea it was ; for she supposed, of course, that it stretched far away until it met the sky behind those heavy clouds she often saw so far off.

She found a great many things among the rubbish, from which she drew her ideas of the people that lived outside the castle, — perhaps, but for these things, she never would have realized that there were people there, — women's clothes ; a pocket - book, in which was the miniature of a beautiful, gentle-looking lady, — oh, what a different thing from old Zutte's ugly, shrivelled, peevish face ! Another treasure was a little crimson-velvet cap, with a white plume on one side of it, — a little cap, quite too small for a man, — it must have belonged to some little boy. Gerda tried it on, but it was too small even for her ! Who could it ever have belonged to ? She had never seen a little boy in all her life ; or, indeed, any little child at all ; but what a nice thing it would have been, she thought, to have had the owner of this little cap to play with ! She felt quite sure he would have come with her into the big shell, to make believe a sail over the wide sea.

The pretty cap, perhaps, had fallen from the little boy's head while he was looking over the side of his papa's boat into the

water. What a loss ! But Zutte told her that all these things had belonged to unfortunate people that had been drowned in the sea ; and then Gerda cried, to think of the little boy tossed up by the waves upon the rocks ; she felt as if she could never again love the sea as much as she did before.

Once there came a very still, lovely evening, and the father and his servants were all out. Zutte, too, had gone to the town ; so Gerda sat all alone, — all alone in the deep, wide-benched window in her room, and looked out at the clear, bright sky : the blue grew darker and darker, and the stars came twinkling out one by one, till every spot almost was full ; at last the moon came too, and floated along among them like a very little ship. The little girl felt an almost inexpressible longing to make one journey ; just one, she did not much care whether it were over the sea or through the sky ; and in the depth of her thinking, she looked up anxiously to the shining moon-boat.

But, to her astonishment, the moon-boat began to float towards the window where she sat ; it came nearer and nearer, until at

last Gerda saw sitting in it a tall lady in a shining white dress, and a soft, sweet face. Presently the boat came close to the window, and the lady held out her hands to Gerda, who, in return, stretched out both her little arms longingly to her. One moment more, and Gerda sat in the lady's lap, with her arm about her to keep her safe, and the boat floated off again up into the sky, high over the sea, the old castle, and the dark forest, and through the thin, light clouds into the outside world.

At first the little girl was very much afraid, and dared not look down into the depths below her; but she cast a glance into the face of the lady, and her fears all vanished.

At last she found courage to ask, "Who are you, Madam?"

"I am the Frau Luna," replied the lady. "I have often looked down at you, my poor, solitary little one, as you sat all alone in the window, wondering what there was beyond the sea you saw every day, and I determined to show you. Now, look! you will not fall."

The lady held her tightly, and she looked

down upon the sea. Here she saw a large ship, such as she had often seen from the castle-window. It appeared to have come from a great distance, but Gerda saw that on the sea where it was, it was night, and she thought that old Zutte must be looking for her to put her to bed.

The stately ship was very beautiful, with her tall masts rising so high into the air, and her white sails spread so wide, as she ploughed her way through the waters, and threw up behind her a broad streak of foam, glittering with bright fire-sparks. But suddenly it became very cloudy; slender boys climbed the masts, or slipped down from their tops, cheering each other as they passed; some of the passengers sat still upon the deck in the cool evening air; some went down into the cabin and gathered around the table, where they feasted and sang gay songs to pass away the time. In the cabin Gerda saw some very little people, that looked so young and innocent, she knew they must be children, for Zutte often, when she spoke of children, called them "little folks." They must have a dear mamma, too,

for a lady laid them in little beds, and bent so lovingly over them, and told them lovely stories of the warm, pleasant lands to which they were going; and when the children fell asleep—as they soon did—they dreamed of brilliantly colored parrots and costly fruits.

“Would you like to stay in the ship,” asked Frau Luna, “and go with these children to their pleasant and wonderful new home?”

Gerda shook her little head: she thought of the storms that so often beat against the castle-rocks, of the ships cast there, of the little boy that had worn the crimson velvet cap, and of all the other people to whom had belonged the treasures that were piled together in the castle-vaults. “I would rather go home,” said she; “I am afraid.”

So the Frau Luna floated her moon-boat back to the solitary castle, and placed the little girl again upon the window-bench in the little room. There Zutte found her when she came to lead her off to bed, and never felt the slightest suspicion that the little one had been away.

. . . . .

Another moon-light night came, and seated in her usual place, Gerda looked up at the bright little boat, and thought of the gentle lady that sailed in it; but she soon saw that it was again floating towards her. The Lady Luna sat in it as before, and lifted the little girl into her lap as she did then. Gerda was fearless now, and could look down without even a shudder, as they sailed through the air. But now she saw no more sea; they had passed over it, and Gerda saw with surprise the solid land, and upon it a great city, sparkling with a thousand lights. The moon-boat stopped over the tallest and most elegant building in the great town, upon one end of which glittered a crown; a clear ray of light streamed from a high window and fell upon a small artificial lake. Gerda peeped into this room and saw that it was decorated with royal splendor.

The jewels and bright shells in the castle-vault were nothing compared with this. The most brilliant flowers strewed the floor, curtains of heavy dark velvet hung over the windows, a thousand waxen tapers burned in crystal chandeliers of the most exquisite

shapes; and men and women, in rich garments, and blazing with gems, danced to the most delicious music, that, to Gerda's ear, accustomed to no music but the monotonous chant of the waves, seemed too ravishing for earth.

In a smaller room near, richly dressed children were dancing too, and tempting, costly food was spread in profusion upon long tables. It was a long, long time before the little girl's eyes could accustom themselves to all this brightness, and take in all the beauty and splendor that was thus exposed to her gaze. "Would you like to stop and live here," asked Frau Luna, "amid all this splendor? It lasts not only all night, while the stars are shining, but all day too; they feast and dance all day, and every day, just as you see them doing now, and flowers always bloom in those beautiful gardens, and little fishes play in that lake. Would you like to stay here?"

Again little Gerda shook her head. "Oh, no, Lady!" said she. "It is too bright and gay; my eyes ache already. Please take me back to old Zutte again!" Before they

reached the lonely shore, little Gerda had fallen asleep, and the Lady Luna laid her upon the stone window-bench where Zutte found and took her to bed.

. . . . .  
Right carefully did the little girl conceal from Zutte the pleasant journeys she took in the moon-boat with her new friend, and very nicely did she manage to be always on the stone window-bench now, when it was time for the gentle lady to come. Every time they went farther and farther, — a great deal farther than my eyes can see; so I cannot tell you all the wonderful things that the child looked down upon. Frau Luna showed her the palm-forests of India, and the orange-groves of Italy, — the solitary mountains and green valleys, and proud and wealthy cities. But lonely as was her life at home, she always wanted to be taken back, so that Frau Luna wondered why she should prefer that old robbers' nest to all the wealth and grandeur of the earth; and Gerda wondered too, but could not tell, for as yet she had not heard God's message to man, nor learned to read her own heart.

At last, though, she saw a scene that filled her with gladness. One calm, cold winter's night, the lady took her to sail over a little country town, and the moon-boat sank lower towards the earth, that Gerda might see all that happened in the small, humble house to which her attention was directed. It was a poor but clean room from which streamed a bright, clear light: it was Christmas eve.

A tall pine-tree, hung full of waxen tapers, and gilded nuts, and sugar stars, and march-pane figures, lighted up the apartment till it was as bright as day; and clustered about the table on which it stood, was a troop of happy, merry children. There was music too, such as Gerda had never heard before. One little boy was beating joyously upon a new drum, only stopping now and then to take a bite of a nice, hard-baked gingerbread-man; a large one was scraping with equal delight upon a violin; a little girl sang an accompaniment more hearty than sweet, while she rocked to sleep a gayly dressed doll; a dumpling-fisted little fellow was dragging a carrier's cart round and round so fast that they both fell down together; a red-necked little girl was

keeping school for her doll by trying to make it spell from her new book, and then ran to her mother, screaming angrily because she could not succeed ;—and besides all these, a chubby baby, in its mother's arms, was stretching out its little fat hands to the lights, and screaming for the good things that still hung upon the tree.

This was a new world for little Gerda ; she no longer felt how cold it was, nor had discovered how closely Frau Luna had wrapped her cloudy cloak about her. She watched in silence until the noise seemed quite stilled and the little school-mistress, who had fallen asleep over her perverse scholar, had been carried off to bed ; then the rest gathered about their mother and sang a sweet, low hymn to the dear Christ-child.

It was Gerda's first sight of a child's world ; Frau Luna did not like to keep the little girl out all night, but the blue eyes filled with tears when the moon-boat again rose into higher air and floated back towards the lonely castle. " You would like to stay here, would you not ? " asked the lady softly and with a smile. But just as softly Gerda answered,

"No; what would I do among those children? They are all so happy they do not need me!" and the sigh became almost a sob.

Frau Luna tried to comfort the lonely child, and bade her listen to the sweet music that they were making to thank the Christ-child. Gerda looked wonderingly in her face as she whispered, "Is he there? Which is he? And why are they singing to him? What are they thanking him for?" In her eagerness she almost lost her breath.

"He is not there," said the lady in reply; "He is up in the heavens here, far above us. Do you know, Gerda, who is the dear God, our Father?"

"Old Zutte cries out sometimes his name," replied the little girl; "and every night, when the wind blows hard and the sea roars very loudly, she makes me say, softly, 'Our Father,' and the rest of it, because then, she says, some one will come and take care of me; but I have never seen anybody yet but old Zutte; she's the only one to take care of me; papa has n't time."

"Our Father," said the Frau Luna, "is

the great and wonderful God who made us and all the world, even to the tiniest fly or bug; and all that He has made He loves. Ages ago He placed me in this beautiful barge, and bade me, when night came, and the world was all covered with thick darkness, to go out into the wide sky, and sail over the whole earth to lighten and to cheer it. A softer, gentler light than the sun gives is shed by the lamp He hung at the bottom of the moon-boat, that eyes weary with weeping and heavy with watching might rest and cease from aching. Ah! sad, sad are some of the sights upon which I sometimes look; dark indeed are some of the places into which I throw my beams! But it is too late to tell you now; and then, too, lonely one, not for a world like that below us, would I cast the shadow of trouble on that young heart! Some other time! Some other time!"

"But the Christ-child!" persisted Gerda; "who is he?"

"Some other time! some other time!" answered the lady. "Ask old Zutte!" and she put the little girl upon the stone window-

bench just as Zutte opened the door and said, "Ah! see how bright the moon is! Really, it seems as if quite close to the window!" but Gerda went to bed and said nothing.

. . . . .

While the cold winter lasted there were no more rides in the bright moon-boat; but when it was again almost spring, she sat once more on the Lady Luna's lap and floated through the air. One night it stood still over a high, moss-covered mountain, close to the sea: the waves dashed against the rocks and roared, just as at the solitary castle; and upon the very highest point sat a lady with a face so pale and sad that she looked almost like Frau Luna herself. She sang softly a low song to the winds and waters, and begged them to tell her what they had done with the husband and the child they had so long ago borne away, and of whom she had never heard again: she asked if they had died upon the sunny shores for which they sailed, or were sleeping far down among the corals and painted shells. Then she covered her pale face with her hands as though she wept softly; and then she rose and went down the hill again.

The Frau Luna lighted her down along the dark and thorny path that led through a thicket of wild bushes to a level plain below. An ivy-wound gate led into a pretty garden full of flowers, and through these she passed to a tasteful cottage. Gerda looked into the little parlor and saw her light a lamp; she was all alone, but the Angel of Peace seemed to be hovering somewhere in the room. A piano, a harp, and some beautiful pictures of the sea and its life, that hung upon the wall, were all the ornaments of the apartment; but there was nothing there that spoke of the presence of children, for everything was in undisturbed order.

Among the pictures, though, was one of a fair boy, and over it, arranged with the same exact order as everything else, hung a bunch of toys; there was a wooden sword, and a little drum, and a little boat with a small flag at the mast-head, besides many more; but none of them looked as if the hand of their little owner had disturbed them for a long time. The mother lifted up the lamp she had lighted, and gazed at them with tears.

Gerda wept too, and wondered if Frau Luna ever looked down upon scenes sadder than this, but she did not ask; only when the moon-boat once more rose into upper air to take her back home, she whispered, — “O show me where sleeps the little child to whom these toys belonged!”

“Far from here,” replied Frau Luna, with a smile. “More than two years have passed since wicked hands lured the noble ship to destruction, and I saw him afterwards lying dead among the rocks beneath your father’s castle. His father was there with him; the murderers’ hands had thrown them where the sea was very deep; but night and morning has the poor mother come here to the hill-top to look for the dear ones who are coming, she thinks, over the waves to her.”

“Take me home,” said Gerda, and her tears fell silently. “But, Lady, bring me here again.” The lady promised, and the little head soon laid quietly on its pillow.

. . . . .  
It was a very bright day out of doors, but within it was gloomy. Zutte sat spinning in the little room, and Gerda, at her side, was

thinking of the poor mother she had seen, of the boy that was lying among the rocks beneath her father's castle, and of the night when Hans had hung out that great lantern, "to light the poor people that were on the sea in the dark." At last she said, — "Tell me, Zutte, how it is: when the storms are raging on the sea, and papa makes the men hang out the lanterns for the poor people in the ships, why are they never saved?"

"Though the ships could hardly escape being wrecked," replied Zutte, with a smile that made the little girl shudder, "your papa's kindness makes their fate more sure; for, seeming to point out a place of safety, they lead them more certainly upon our rocks."

"Why then, do they hang them out?" demanded the child, in astonishment, coming closer to the old woman, and looking eagerly into her face.

"When those who sail in the ships are all dead, their cargos and treasures are ours," answered Zutte.

The child looked still more perplexed.

"But, Zutte, are n't some of them alive when they get to the shore?"

"The sea is deep," answered Zutte, her fearful smile now passing into a look of sadness; "the dead and the half-dead rest in it equally well, and then there are none left to tell the tale!"

With a look of agony the child caught hold of the old woman's hand, as she exclaimed, "Zutte, tell me, what is my father?"

"A wrecker!" was the reply. Gerda was too young and innocent to know what she meant; but the tone, the look, the whole manner told a fearful tale, and she covered her face with her tiny hands and shuddered.

But Zutte seemed not to see her; she went on as if talking to herself, — "Yes, he broke the heart of his gentle lady; she could not live with these agonized death-groans ever in her ears; she could not look out upon God's mighty sea, and see His power in the heaving waves, while she knew that her husband was plying his fearful work under that Eye. Oh! if her child were but lying beside her, not one moment more would I stay in this den of sin! No; I would fly to the farthest ends of the earth to escape the wrath that must, that will yet fall upon it. But where could

poor old Zutte go?" and she lowered her voice as if almost in despair. "Yes," — and a thought of comfort seemed to dart into her mind, — "I would go to one of those peaceful spots where Christian women gather together and live in Christian love, praying for pardon for their own sins and those of others. I'd go there."

"Yes, go, Zutte! and take me with you, do!" entreated a little voice at her side, which, gentle as it was, startled the old woman as if a musket had been fired close to her ear.

"I dare not," said the old woman, more kindly. "I dare not; and when you are older you will not want to go there. You will go out into the world with your father, and with the gold he has thus gained by crime, live in luxury and splendor. You will be a great lady, Gerda."

Gerda shook her head, but said no more. That night she slipped into the little sitting-room earlier than usual to wait for Frau Luna, and with her she took the little crimson-velvet cap. Of all that had been given her as her own, and of all the rich treasures

in the castle-vault, that was all she wanted then, and with it in her hand she sat down upon the stone window-bench.

Frau Luna came again, and once more took her to the high hill beside the sea, where the pale mother sat looking out for her child. When she turned to go back to the pretty cottage, Gerda whispered,—“I would like to stay here, Lady! Here I should not be alone; I will be a child to that poor mother!”

With a smile, Frau Luna wrapped the little one in her own silvery veil, and the moon-boat floated down to earth.

. . . . .

When morning came, a bright, clear sun scattered the mists that rose from the sea; the breakers dashed and foamed as ever; but beyond them the waters laid like a bright mirror. White sea-gulls were flying over and brushing the crests of the waves with their long wings, and fresh breezes played over its waters like greetings sent by the ocean-god to hail the land.

Silently and wearily the pale mother again climbed the hill beside the sea, and strained her gaze far over it; but not a sail was in

sight, and with a soft sigh, she sat down upon a mossy stone, her wonted resting-place. Suddenly she started up, for a strange object was lying among the grass at her feet. It was a child in a deep sleep. She looked like a tiny rose-bud just taken from the side of some pure and colorless mother that had decked the brow of a young bride; her dress told of a far, far off land, and in her little hand she held tightly a crimson-velvet cap, with a white plume.

Well the mother knew that cap, and tore it from the fingers of the sleeping child; within were the letters of a familiar name, wrought in bright-colored silks by her own fingers. "Arthur! my child! my own dear boy! where art thou?" she shouted in her joy, and looked up eagerly to see the light graceful form bounding towards her from behind some bush or sheltering tree where he had hidden.

But he did not come; and when Gerda awoke and fixed her great, soft, but sad blue eyes upon her, she asked in terror, "Knowest thou, little one, where my boy is?"

Gerda pointed to the sea. "He is sleeping

under there," said she, softly; "he has been there a long, long time."

The mother covered her face and wept; she had known it long, but never before had dared to believe; and now it seemed as if he had just, for the first time, been snatched from her. Then she turned again to the child and asked,—“Whence hast thou come, little one; and what dost thou know of my boy?”

“I know nothing of him,” replied Gerda, “except that the Lady Luna told me he was sleeping among the rocks where the waves dash beneath my father’s castle; and I found his cap.”

The lady was too deeply buried in her own sad remembrances to give one thought to the strange and sudden appearance of the child, or to ask about it; she took her little hand, and without a word, led her to the pretty cottage; holding tightly, meanwhile, the little velvet cap. Once more in her little parlor, she looked up to the picture of her boy, and wept bitterly; and Gerda sat silently at her feet and looked at her in pity.

But the faithful servant, that had so long

shared her sorrows, was now gazing at the little girl, and she too asked,—“Whence hast thou come, my child?”

“From my father’s castle, on the solitary rock, a great, great ways off,” replied Gerda, quietly.

“And how did’st thou get here, little one?”

“I came in a little ship,” replied Gerda, timidly; she hesitated, she hardly knew why, about saying anything of her journeys with Frau Luna; and more than this, neither mistress nor maid could get from her. At last they satisfied themselves with the idea—though really an improbable one—that either by accident or design she had been left on shore by some passing vessel.

“And will you stay with me, dear child?” asked the sad lady.

“Oh, yes, indeed I will; that is what I came for!” said the child, with joy in her soft eyes; and mistress and maid looked at each other in perplexity. “We are both alone,” said the child, “so I came to comfort you. There is nobody to take care of me in the castle but old Zutte, and she does n’t want to stay there; it is only for my sake she

does; now she can go away. I wanted to come here and bring you the cap."

"Why, how did you know anything about me?" asked the astonished lady.

"I saw you when I looked down over the side of the little boat, and you were watching, at night, on the high hill beside the sea."

"Looked down over the side of the boat? What boat, little lady?"

But Gerda said no more; she dared not explain, so she would not speak.

So Gerda became the child of that silent, joyless house; the lady and her faithful attendant soon found that the little creature grew sad and silent when they spoke of her past life, and so they ceased to refer to it; they looked upon her as a treasure given by a pitying Father in heaven to comfort the poor, childless mother. A wild and noisy child would have made her uncomfortable; but Gerda's soft and gentle ways won upon her heart until she loved her as if she had been really her own. Those long years of fear and hope for her dear ones had so bowed her down, that now, sorrowful as was the reality, it brought her a sort of rest

and relief that she sorely needed ; she knew now that on earth they would never meet again ; but it was very sweet to know that they were safe with their God in heaven.

A glad though silent life it was that Gerda passed at the pretty cottage ; to the poor child's heart it was unspeakable comfort, and her pale cheek grew ruddy and her form light as air. She knew nothing of toys, like other children, and felt no longing for them ; she found the pictured books that had belonged to the lost one, and the wondrous birds and flowers and trees that filled the new world in which she lived were never seen about the bare and solitary rock on which stood the old castle.

But her dearest pleasure was to sit at the feet of "her mamma," as she had long since learned to call the lonely lady, and listen while she spoke of her dead boy ; so light-headed, yet so gentle and obedient ; how soon he learned to go with his father upon the sea, and how fearless he was there ; how, while yet but a little child, he had sailed alone a light boat with a bright red flag, and bore himself so bravely ; that when his twelfth

summer came, his father had yielded to his entreaties and taken him to make his first great voyage. Alas! his *last* one too! The poor mother never wearied with telling all this over and over; and how, when he took his last farewell, he sprang again from his place on the vessel's deck, and ran to give her another kiss. Then she would weep bitterly at the remembrance, and Gerda would weep too.

Together they went every pleasant evening to the top of the hill beside the sea, but not now to look abroad over the wide waters for signs of the absent ones; they sat there side by side until the sun had set and the golden stars had taken all their places in the clear blue sky, very happy in the thought that dear ones were looking down upon them. Carefully did the sad, pale lady teach her stray darling of the great and merciful God to whom old Zutte had so ignorantly taught her to appeal for safety and protection; and little Gerda listened with breathless eagerness.

Again she demanded, "Who is the Christ-child?" and now an answer was given; her new mother told into her wondering ears the

marvellous story of the God-man who came to earth as an humble, helpless babe. She told how the little stranger could find, in all the broad earth that he had come to save, no place but in the stable of a country inn; how the cruel, jealous Herod had sought the life of that helpless little one, and for his sake butchered all the little ones of Bethlehem; and how, when he had grown to be a man, amid all his sufferings, all his sorrows, he had a heart full of love and sympathy for the children, and when stern, hard men would have driven them from him, called them to his side, and blessed them, and said kindly,—“Suffer little children to come unto me and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of heaven!” of just such innocent, trusting souls. And Gerda, when she had heard it, thought it not at all strange that good and holy but simple and unlearned peasants should have believed that, as a white-winged angel, the gentle Christ-child still watched over the happiness of their little ones, and filled their little hearts with joy and happiness.

She thought it not at all strange that when

the Christmas eve came, and men and women were rejoicing to celebrate that wondrous night on which the angels came down to tell the shepherds of the birth of the Holy Babe, they should give the little children a share in their delight; and look upon the few pence they were able to save for the purchase of these delights, as almost a special gift from the Christ-child for that purpose. Was it not very natural, then, that when the dear-bought trifles were hung upon the green branch with which, in their gladness, they decked their houses, they should suspend above it the white-winged angel, to teach the little ones whose love it was that sent them the enjoyment?

Very happy was little Gerda as she sat and listened to all this, and happier still that she had learned how, in hours of sadness and gloom, to go to "Our Father" and pray for his love and help. Often from her place upon the hill she prayed for her sinful, misguided father; prayed that he might be turned from his life of crime and led to peace and happiness.

Gerda and her mother no longer wept for

the dead, for they knew that it was all well with them now; and many calm and peaceful hours they spent together in their quiet cottage-home. In the flower-garden that surrounded it there were inexhaustible stores of pleasure; each blossom was to her like a darling child; she knew how many buds there were on every stem, and could scarce wait for the coming day to see these opening beauties. She made all sorts of fanciful huts and tents of leaves and branches, to shelter them from the sun's heat, and travelled unweariedly from path to path with her little watering-pot to save them from drought. "The dear God's beautiful little children!" she said, and touched their soft leaves.

The birds, too, she loved; not one would she have caged for thousands; but in the bushes behind the fence, where it was still and safe, and where no rude hand would disturb them, she loved to stand and watch them as they built their nests, and sang and twittered, and flew about to their heart's content. Between the neighboring trees she hung little baskets filled with seeds and crumbs, and here she sat for hours and looked on as they

helped themselves daintily to the welcome feast, or brought straw and grass for the new nest. She knew well where the nests were hidden, and loved well to stand and watch them feeding the wide mouths that opened whenever they came near; but the little girl's movements were too soft and gentle to startle even a timid bird, and so they lost all fear, and sometimes even flew down upon her head or shoulder.

But the mother did not always leave her adopted child alone with the birds and flowers; she led her sometimes to the little town on the sea-coast, where the poor and the sick well knew the pale lady in the black dress.

Gerda was not sufficiently accustomed to children to enjoy their company; she was too timid to feel at ease among them, and would rather have stayed at home; but the mother knew that it would not be for her good to indulge such a feeling, and tried very gently to do away with it. Sometimes she let her make a jacket for the poor, half-naked boy they had met on the road-side; sometimes she might carry the cooling drink to the sick girl whose lips were parched and dry; some-

times she might take a nice book to the pretty, good-natured little boy who had picked ripe strawberries for her; thus, little by little, she became used to being with others, and learned to love them by her efforts to do them good.

Of her journeys with Frau Luna she often thought, as of a long past dream, and never spoke of them. When the silver Moon-barge *seemed* to come so near, so very near the window that she fancied she saw Frau Luna in it, she would nod with a pleasant smile; but if it appeared to stop a while, she thought the pale lady wanted to take her up again, and shaking her little head, she whispered softly, "No, no, Frau Luna, not now; for I have found a dear home."

. . . . .  
For many years had the mother and her adopted child thus lived, happy in each other; but the mother, who, though still young, felt her strength failing with every passing day, and often looked with silent anxiety upon the dear and lovely girl whom she was so soon to leave alone in a world that was so strange to her. But Gerda knew nothing of this, and

went on her quiet course, happy in her own little world that she never, for a moment, thought *could* change.

The hill by the sea-side was her favorite seat, and there, even without her mother, she went to sit and look out over the waters. Many a stately ship had she seen go by, but none stopped, for the breakers were too rough and wild.

There came a stormy autumn evening, and Gerda's mind seemed haunted as by a long-forgotten dream, by the remembrance of the old life at the castle, when the storms raged so fearfully around it, and the waves dashed so furiously upon the rocks beneath. The mother went early to bed, she could not endure now to hear the raging of the storm; but Gerda felt a wild desire to climb the hill-top and once more to look out upon a storm at sea; so wrapping herself closely in hood and shawl, she left the house, unseen by those who watched over her so carefully.

Sometimes a wild blast would rend the black clouds that hung about the moon, and then a stream of soft, pure light would pour down upon the sea, whose heaving waves

were tossing mountain-high. Not far from the shore a vessel was struggling with the billows; the booming of guns and cries of distress came faintly through the uproar of wind and waters; a crowd had gathered on the beach, and with ropes and lanterns were running to and fro; but no one dared encounter the breakers to go to the relief of the sufferers. Gerda looked in agony upon the poor, drowning strangers, but something held her chained to the spot.

Suddenly, by a gush of moonlight, she saw a man throw himself from the ship into the water, and she uttered a cry of fear. Manfully he breasted the waves, and they seemed to lift him lightly upon their backs and bear him to the shore; with a strong arm he beat them back and was safe. But only a few of those who were watching the laboring ship saw this strife; all eyes were fixed upon the rolling mass; but Gerda saw him, as, at last, he reached the shore, and sank exhausted at the foot of the hill. Rapidly as the rough and stony path would allow, the girl rushed down to the spot where the rescued man laid, bleeding from the wounds the broken rocks

had given him, pale, and breathing heavily; he was stretched upon the wet sand, and Gerda knelt beside him. Again a stream of the bright moonlight — it fell upon his haggard face, and she saw — her father!

She knew him, — and in that single moment all that had made her childhood so sad and lonely was forgotten. She called him “father,” she chafed his cold hands, she wrapped around him her warm cloak, and the strong man revived. He himself was not changed, but his child was bursting into lovely girlhood, and he looked at her as if in a dream.

“You called me ‘father’!” said he, sitting up and gazing at her. “Quick! are you indeed my Gerda?” And for the first time in long, long years, he wept. But he asked no explanation, no clearing up of the mystery; so content, so glad was he to yield his faith to her simple assertion: —

“Father! I am your little Gerda!”

He raised himself from the ground; the recovery of his child had given him new strength, and a scene of touching love and gratitude drew tears from eyes all unused to

shed them. There the stricken man confessed that he was flying from vengeance; after years spent in crime in his early youth, he had taken refuge in the solitary castle on the rock, whither none had followed him but his devoted wife and a few faithful attendants. Here little Gerda had been born, and when the mother had left him that blossom of her own life, to comfort and win him back to better things, she had gone to her better home in heaven, whence, as a guardian angel, she could watch over his pathway and lead his feet into happier and purer ways. But, alas! she had been his guardian angel while upon earth, and with her he lost all that had power to check or lead him.

At first he had shared with the rude people of the coast the goods they took from such vessels as were stranded there; but soon that grew tame and tasteless; he must go farther, he must plunge more deeply into crime; so with a few chosen companions, in the shelter of the old castle, they carried on their wretched trade. Hanging lighted lanterns from turret and window, they lured to destruction vessels that were on that fearful coast, where death

seemed to sit brooding upon frowning rocks dashed by the roaring waters; taking their lights for friendly signals set for them by a Heaven-directed hand, they sailed fearlessly towards the blessed haven, only to find a surer and more fearful death. Nor was that all, for many a one to whom the sea and rocks had proved harmless, whom even the elements had spared, they had seized, robbed, and buried, half-dead, beneath the waters.

“I had thought,” said the wretched man, “to give up that sinful life when you had reached womanhood; I hoped by all this hoarded wealth, ill-gotten as it was, to place you in better hands than mine. But I was not permitted to do so. My day of retribution came: my child was gone! We thought that you had fallen from a window into the sea, and this thought crushed me. My darling was lying where I had lain the darlings of others. When the cold, bright moonlight streamed into my room, I saw in fancy every vessel I had wrecked, every form I had robbed and murdered rose before me, dripping with the salty waves, and jibbering and jeering, they told me how quietly you were sleeping

beside them below. I dared no longer to let in the light; I dared no longer to stay in that lonely place, yet I was surrounded by those whose consciences I had helped to sear, whose hands I had helped to train to murder, and they would not let me leave them; they would not let me be any other than I was.

“But at last I grew desperate; by threats of discovery and punishment I forced them to pull down the blood-stained nest. I divided among them all that remained of my sinful wealth, and exacted only a promise to build a beacon of warning upon the rock from which no light had ever before shined but the death-lantern. For myself I cared not what became of me. Restless and uneasy I shipped as a sailor: in perils and in storms, fearing only to live too long, I did what others dared not think of. And oh! may the merciful Father, who has seen my tears, heard my groans, let some of the many, many lives I have rescued, atone for those I once destroyed!” And with clasped and trembling hands the soul-stricken man lifted his eyes to heaven, and his quivering lips formed words that took no sound to human ears,

though, perhaps, they were heard with pitying mercy in the courts above. After a little he went on again.

“When this tempest overtook us, I felt as if my curse rested upon the ship in which I sailed; as if I were the doomed one for whose sake all must suffer. I determined to relieve them of my presence, to give them a chance for safety, and plunged into the sea to swim to the shore. But oh! can I doubt that my prayers have been heard? Can I doubt that my penitence has been accepted, when, expecting only misery and death, I have found my child and happiness?”

“From the God of heaven comes joy and pardon,” said Gerda, softly; and with her arm around his neck, she told him the blessed message of redeeming love and eternal happiness. Never before had that light broken upon his darkened mind; never before had his ears drank in those holy truths in their fulness; for it was only by name, shall we say—only from the lips of blasphemy that he had heard of a God. Only from the lips of his dying victims that he had heard of mercy, pardon, and salvation. But now it

had all been made clear, the whole wondrous story had been told, and he could not doubt; the mercy that even then had given him back his child would not fail elsewhere; and without a thought of shame, in presence of all the multitude that now thronged the beach, he knelt with Gerda under the broad canopy that curtains the universe, and with artless words, but from the fulness of a bursting heart, gave thanks to "the Father of mercies."

The storm ceased, the waves forbore their rude, wild play, the moon shone still and clear upon the earth, and the angels in heaven rejoiced over a sinner repentant.

Suddenly a red light illumined the spot where they stood, and a cry burst from the crowd upon the beach; the ship, that scarce an hour before was struggling with the waves, was on fire, and with fearful and untamable beauty the flames shot upward.

Roderic—for so was Gerda's father named—rushed to the water's edge; it was the work of only an instant to spring into a little skiff that was moored there, and push out towards the burning ship, from which a few were try-

ing to escape in their own boats. He reached the vessel, and with imprudent haste, all who still stood upon the deck sought to take shelter in the heaven-sent skiff; but it would not hold them all. Earnestly Roderic prayed them to await his return; faithfully he promised to come back and save them all, — but in vain! The fear of death had fallen upon them: each thought only of himself, and that which should have been their deliverance seemed only a varied form of destruction.

One alone stood still upon the burning deck patiently awaiting his fate; he was a young and noble man, wearing the uniform of an officer. By the light of a mounting flame Roderic saw him as he leaned against the mast; and giving the rudder into the hands of a sturdy sailor, threw himself into the sea. He swam to the ship, he called the young man to spring into the water to him, and was obeyed; with desperate strength he tore away a plank, and supporting himself upon it while with one outstretched arm he upheld his charge, with the other he battled the swelling waves and forced his way landward.

The storm had again burst forth, the breakers tossed wildly, fearfully as before; they neared the skiff; it was already full; none would give place to the exhausted man. With one strong effort of his failing strength Roderic plunged through the roaring surf; threw far up on the thronged beach the body of his unconscious companion, and fell back into the sea. His duty was done, his strength was gone; the waves, with a low murmur, closed over him, and he sank forever. Gerda, kneeling upon the sand, had seen it all; the young man was saved, and as her father disappeared beneath the waters, she sank senseless upon the sand.

The pitying landsmen received the skiff and its unhappy passengers, and gave them food and shelter; it was all they had to give. Gerda and the young officer were carried carefully to the cottage, where all were awake, and searching tearfully for the missing girl. But Gerda knew nothing of it; they laid her, like a tired child, upon her bed, and she slept away the remembrance of her anxiety and pain.

. . . . .

"Sorrow may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." Storm and wind were hushed, the air was filled with the song of birds, and the sunlight in its beauty streamed through the ivy that mantled Gerda's window. She awoke exhausted, and could not remember what had happened the day before; but arose, dressed herself, and descended, somewhat fatigued, into the little sitting-room.

Upon the sofa laid a young man: his face was pale, but the freshness of youth was on his cheek and in his eye; and over him her mother was leaning, with beaming countenance, watching every shade that passed over his face. Joyous was the look with which she stretched out her hand to Gerda and exclaimed, "Come, see him, my Gerda — it is Arthur!"

Then Gerda knew that she had not been passing through a fearful dream, and while filled with joy that the mother had again found her boy, she shuddered to think of her father's look of wretchedness and his sudden death. But she felt that in another world she should find him for eternity, and from

her heart she rejoiced in the happiness around her.

Before noon the lady of the cottage had gathered for the use of the shipwrecked strangers all that the house afforded of clothing and food, but she herself sat in the arbor of her own beautiful garden, with her children on either side of her ; her head rested upon Arthur's breast, her hand was clasped in Gerda's, and both listened while the youth told of his escape from that watery grave to which he had been consigned, and what had befallen him since.

"It was a fearful storm," said he, "on the night when our vessel struck upon the rocks by the old castle, and I can tell you little about it. I saw my dear father sink beneath the waves ; me they threw far up upon the shore, but I was as if dead ; I knew only that a fierce, dark man took me up in his arms and laid me down in a corner of a room. How I got there I never knew, but he evidently supposed me dead, and wished to plunder me without the knowledge of his companions.

“ I came to my full consciousness the next night, when one of our sailors, who, it seems, had managed to escape undetected, crept into the same room to seek a hiding-place ; it was a sort of vault under the old castle, and opened to the sea. We knew well the trade of all there, and managed to get into the forest on the other side, from whence we stole off into the interior of the country. For weeks we were in the greatest misery, surrounded by those to whom we were afraid to apply for help, for we knew not how far they were connected with the wreckers on the rock. We suffered from hunger and fatigue until we succeeded in reaching another part of the coast, and here a ship in passing took us up.

“ But unfortunately this vessel was not going homewards ; she was bound on a very, very long voyage, and we were, of course, obliged to go with her. Sometimes we were in latitudes where everything about us froze as hard as iron ; then again we were melting under a tropical sun ; sometimes surrounded by whales and icebergs, sometimes by dolphins and flying-fishes. My father’s name

was known to all on board, and did me good service, and I gave myself no rest, but discharged my duties to the utmost of my powers, and won the praise of all my superiors. When I left this vessel, I shipped in another; I was too far away to expect to find readily a ship coming here, but I managed to work round so as to get nearer and nearer with every change, and in every case was equally fortunate in winning the good-will of those above me.

“ After a while I found myself in a strange country, and so situated that I was obliged to stay and serve its king, whether I would or not. He was at war with one of his neighbors, and his ships were all employed in naval service ; the state of affairs rendered commerce so unsafe that merchantmen dared not venture to sea, and so all the sailors in the kingdom, myself among the rest, were forced to serve on board the ships of the navy. Here, too, I was so happy as to please my superior officers, and was promoted from rank to rank until I reached my present position. Here I remained until a few months since, so situated that, though the war was long since

concluded, I could not leave my place to return home, without injuring seriously the interests of those who had been to me the kindest and best of friends when I was a poor and unknown wanderer.

“But at last they gave me the command of a small frigate bound homewards; how it has terminated you know; but to tell you minutely all my adventures by sea and land, would keep me talking for a year.”

Then Gerda, in a low voice, told how she had found her father, the night before, upon the beach; how he had told her all his guilt and repentance; and the part that he had taken in aiding Arthur to escape. From her inmost soul the mother answered,—“The dear and holy God have mercy upon him, for he has repented and made amends for his faults.” Then they all three folded their hands and whispered a prayer.

. . . . .

After many days the body of the lost Rod-eric was thrown up by the waves upon the shore; the sailors had well known how to appreciate his courage and the devotion he had shown in their service; and Gerda saw

and thanked her heavenly Father for the look of happiness that, even in death, a sense of sin pardoned and duty performed had impressed upon those weather-stained features. He was buried beside Arthur's friends, next to a memorial-tablet that the lady of the cottage had erected there in memory of her own distant dead, and with the honors due to his rank and family. A plain stone marks the wrecker's grave, and upon it stands written, — "I will blot out thy misdeeds like the mists, and thy sins as the clouds. Lean thou upon me, and I will save thee."

. . . . .  
The days of darkness and of sorrow were now past, and the mother lived with her children in happiness and peace. Gerda and Arthur renewed her youth, and were to each other as sister and brother. Once more they sat together in the beautiful moonlight of a summer's night, and Gerda told them, for the first time, of her early life in the solitary castle on the rock where Arthur's troubles began. She told them how she had played with the velvet cap; and then very softly, as if afraid they would scarce believe the tale,

she told how, night after night, she had sailed with the Frau Luna over the great wide world, and looked down upon its scenes of joy and pain, until the silver barge had brought her to their own quiet cottage-home.

Arthur laughed and shook his bright curls at this part of the story, and said, "You surely dreamed that, Gretchen; I think the truth of the matter is that old Zutte smuggled you off in some passing ship to get you out of the old nest, and you were brought and left here in your sleep."

"No, no!" insisted Gerda, "I *know* it is all true, wonderful as it is; but do you know what seems to me the most wonderful part of all?"

"No; what?"

"That Frau Luna did not know you were still alive. She looks down so much upon every part of the earth, that she must see all that happens on it."

"Yes, Gretchen, I can tell you. It was new moon the night I came again to myself, and for several nights after, and so Frau Luna could see very little of what was going on just then."

While his mother lived Arthur never again went to sea; but, alas! that was not very long. Yet before she left them Gerda was his own dear wife. After that he made many pleasant and profitable voyages; but whenever he was going, and Gerda, with tears, entreated him, — “Come back to me quickly, my Arthur, and God speed you on your way,” he would kiss her, and with a smile whisper, “But don’t go anywhere with Frau Luna, Gretchen, while I am away.”

THE END.

# A QUEEN

A Story for Girls.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF  
MADAME OTTALIE WILDERMUTH.

BY  
ANNA B. COOKE.



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## A QUEEN.



### CHAPTER I.



PON a broad, smooth meadow stood the dwelling of a peasant, whose chief support was drawn from the forest, from which, indeed, his farm had been taken,—and whose house was the largest and best for some distance round. It was Saturday afternoon,—the eve of the Lord's Day, and within doors,—for in that remote province everybody still adhered to the good old habits of their pious ancestors,—everything had been neatly arranged, and was left in quiet order, that all might be ready to give the proper devotional welcome to the coming day.

The green in front of the house, however, presented a scene quite animated enough to

show that there was active life somewhere, though there was none of the bustle usually attendant upon week-day occupations, when one labor presses so closely upon another as to leave between them little time for rest. The old grandmother had put aside her wheel, and now sat in the sunniest spot she could find, with baby Gretchen on her lap; the peasant himself, a healthy, pleasant-looking man, sat on a wooden bench, peeling willow-rods. The hired man was bestirring himself to finish up some odd jobs; the serving-boy was cleaning up the litter that had accumulated in different spots; the tailor, who had been there all the week, making and mending, and had been invited to stay over Sunday, sat idly enjoying the calmness and repose of the hour; the maid and the house-mother—as the mistress of the family is so beautifully called in Germany—were peeling potatoes for the family supper; and the children were playing in the grass. Liese, the eldest little daughter, was admiring the pretty, new apron that the sewing-woman had just brought home to be in readiness for the morrow; and upon a low

branch of the linden-tree sat Margelte, (or, as we should say in English, "Maggie,") the orphan of a poor woman who had supported herself by spinning, and whose destitute child the kind-hearted peasant and his wife had, "for the dear God's sake," taken into their own family.

"To-morrow night they are all to start for America," said the tailor, suddenly breaking the silence. "There will be a great wagon full of them, and Christoford, the son of mine host of the Eagle, is to be one."

"Well," said the peasant, "I thank the dear God that I have no need to go abroad for a living; I get on very well at home."

"Yes, I believe that," said one of the maids, timidly. "You say what is very true, cousin," (for among the peasantry of the fatherland, cousin, uncle, &c. are the names by which the employed commonly address their employers,) "but I think *I* should like to be going with them, for what could a poor thing like me do better? And who knows, either, what might come to one out there?"

"I would rather get a service-place in the town," said the other girl, half aloud; "that

is not so far off; there are always places enough to be had; and in the town, oh, they do wear such beautiful clothes!"

"And I would like to be a soldier!" exclaimed little Michele, who had heard just enough to understand that they were naming their favorite occupations. "But I want to be a real soldier, and have a horse, and a golden trumpet!"

"I'd rather be a butcher!" cried Jakoble, (or, in English, "Ja-key.") "Butchers have to travel so far! They go all over and see such fine places, and such beautiful cattle! What do you want to be, George?"

"A farmer," replied George, the eldest son of the house, with an air of great importance. "There is no trade better than that, or pleasanter either."

"I don't think so," simpered Liese, with many airs and graces. "The town-folks are a great deal more genteel. I'd like to be a town-lady, or a school-mistress; then one can have as much money as she wants, and need n't be plagued."

"Really, you are very knowing," said the house-mother, rather sharply. "Town-folks

more genteel, indeed! In my opinion, it's the meanest sort of life you can lead, to be obliged to buy every pound of flour you use, and every time you go to put a morsel into your mouth, have to ask 'How much for it?'"

"Well, now, and what do you want to be?" said the quick-witted tailor, turning to Margelte, with whom he often passed a merry jest. "What, now? A ballet-dancer, perhaps?"

"A queen," was the quiet answer.

A shout of laughter burst from every mouth. Margelte — the little charity-girl — a queen!

"Well, you're not a fool, after all," said the tailor. "But how will you go to work to make yourself one?"

"Oh, I sha'n't take much trouble about it," said Maggie, from her perch. "I dreamed once that I was one and had a golden crown on my head, and I liked it very much; so I would like to have it come to pass. But things of that kind, you know, tailor, must come of themselves; you can't cut them out and patch them together as you do tailoring work."

The laugh was now turned against the tailor, who seemed for the time no longer inclined to jest with the little damsel.

“Come down here, in the mean time, Madame Queen, and empty these potato-parings in the pig-pen!” called the house-mother.

Margelte hopped down like a bird, and laughed heartily with the rest at the unqueenly nature of the job; it was nearly dark, too, so everybody was obliged to go into the house.

From that day forth Margelte went altogether by the name of “Madame Queen,” and was many a time bantered and laughed at about her wish. She did not let that trouble her, however, but went merrily on her way; it was not possible to hurt her feelings seriously, for a more kind, merry-hearted creature the world did not contain. She sang from morning till night, and after she had been driven from one piece of work to another through the whole day, she was as lively and active in the evening as a young quail.

And there was something very queenly in her, too,—she was so gentle, so kind to all about her; poor as she was, those who felt

inclined to look down upon her found themselves foiled. The peasant's wild children had, at first, looked upon her as nothing better than a little dog upon whom they could indulge all their whims: sometimes they made her go on all fours like a dog; sometimes they wanted to get on her back and ride as if she were a horse; then she must put into her pocket the stones of all the plums that they had stolen and eaten, so that, if the theft were discovered, she would have to take the punishment. And the mother knew all this, but never took any measures to prevent it; she felt kindly towards the little thing, and would not for the world have seen her suffer what she considered serious ill-treatment; but these were only *little annoyances*, — *little things*, — and she contented her conscience with the thought that it would do no harm for a child, situated as she was, to learn betimes not to mind trifles.

Liese, particularly, looked upon her with great superiority, and put on airs of vast dignity towards the poor little orphan in her ragged clothes; so the child had no one to whom to open her heart except the orphan's

God, to whom her mother had taught her, from her very infancy, to go as to a dear and loving friend. And such He had indeed shown Himself, for he had bestowed upon her the blessed gift of a mind always contented and happy, throwing off trouble as a young bird shakes from its wings the drops of the summer rain. Many a child, blessed with kind parents, and everything else that could make life and them comfortable and happy, does more grumbling, shows more discontent in one day, than Margelte did in a whole year.

Then, too, she had a pair of clear, honest eyes, and skilful fingers upon those little hands of hers, for she never lost an opportunity of learning something new, and knew how to make herself dear and useful to everybody. If Michele insisted upon having her help in playing some of his wild, rough games, she would say, quickly, "Oh, that is n't nice! Just see here, Michele, I know such a pretty story!" and before you could think, there sat, not only Michele, but all the rest of the young ones, still as mice, close up around her, listening to what she was telling;

for she did indeed know very beautiful stories that her mother had taught her,— one of a beautiful lady named Genevieve, and “The Children in the Woods,” and others still prettier.

Liese, with all her airs of dignity, was a very careless, slovenly little girl, always looking for things she had lost, and would n’t, for a great deal, have her mother to know that she had; and lucky was it for her that Margelte had been taught to be both neat and careful. It would be — “Oh, what in the world has become of my spindle!” “Where in the world is my thimble! I had it yesterday, and now I can’t find it anywhere!”

“You left it yesterday,” Margelte would whisper, “lying on the floor, and I laid it in your drawer.”

Then there was another trouble for the poor orphan to bear. Liese was a most miserable hand at spinning; she had learned from the sewing-woman how to crochet, and found it much more agreeable work; but her industrious, unpretending mother thought this rather an unprofitable way of spending time, and would not indulge her in it. The

spinning-wheel, however, showed very plainly how little interest she took in it, and was a sad-looking affair; the thread was all falling from the spindle, the hanks of beautiful yellow flax were tumbled about like bunches of old tow, and the poor mother grieved and scolded about it.

Now Margelte had been taught by her mother to do all kinds of fine spinning, at a much earlier age than little girls are generally put to such work; but the house-mother professed not to be able to trust her with anything but the very coarsest materials, and kept her upon them. The little thing felt grieved to see all the fine flax wasted, and she pitied Liese, too, for having to do what she so much disliked; so sometimes she would go to her and say, "Come, let's see if I can't help you!" taking care, though, to say it when the mother was out of the room; and in a few moments the broken thread was spun together again, the flax was all smooth and in order, and the yarn twisted firmly and evenly upon the spindle. The little serving-maid would declare that "Margelte was a witch"; the mother would praise Liese's

work, and boast how "beautifully she spun flax, though she never could trust Margelte with anything better than coarse wool or tow"; and Liese was not generous enough to tell the truth, but would take all the praise and hear poor Maggie thus depreciated. Her heart, though, was softened towards her, and she gradually left off her airs and unkind treatment.

Thus, with her merry temper and obliging kindness, the little orphan managed to make friends of everybody; everybody seemed glad to do her a good turn, and none remarked — herself least of all — how completely she ruled the whole house, — an unconscious "queen."

With that rosy little mouth of hers she dared to say many a thing that would have come very ill from anybody else. Once the head farm-servant came home very drunk, and not for the first time either; the next day he got up cross and ill-natured, and, tying up his aching head, went out to do something in the door-yard, where Margelte too happened just then to be busy. "Caspar," said she, "do you know what is the difference between you and an ox?"

"No," replied Caspar. "What is it?"

"Why, an ox swills till he's full, and you swill till you're a fool!" answered Margelte; and she ran as fast as she could and climbed into the linden-tree, for she was rather doubtful how her riddle would be received.

Sure enough, Caspar flew into a terrible passion, for he felt very cross. "Just wait, you little toad!" cried the fellow, and he shook at her his clenched fist. "I'll show you another difference before long!"

"Oh, I know another, too!" cried Margelte, in some alarm, from the tree into which she had scrambled. Caspar was too much unjointed just then to climb after her, and remained standing where he was while she went on: "When an ox is mad, he runs after people and shakes his horns at them; but Caspar has sense, and says to himself, 'Another time I won't be such a fool as to put anything down my throat that will make even a little toad like that see what an ass I act like.'"

"You're right," growled Caspar, and, turning off, he went back to his work. For weeks and months afterwards the peasant

wondered how it was that his man now so seldom came home top-heavy; indeed, he never stopped wondering until he got used to it.

Margelte, with her clear eyes, saw, too, many a thing that people did not wish seen; but she did not run straight to the mistress to tell of it; she seemed always to find a way of reproving and making them feel sorry for what they had done that was wrong; and she never did so intentionally, either; she never seemed to think what she was going to do or say, but a holy horror of wrong, implanted in her heart by that dear friend of hers in heaven, — God himself, — and carefully cultivated and strengthened by her mother, appeared to furnish her always with the right word at the right time.

At last the house-mother, in an extraordinary fit of kindness, determined that little Margelte should go to school, though she did have some misgivings that it was rather extravagant to give such advantages to a poor charity-girl. But the pastor and the school-master were both heartily rejoiced at the idea; and though, for the poor child's own

sake, they dared not say too much about it, they did manage so to convince the good woman of the great profit it would be to her and benefit to her own children, that Margelte was finally permitted to go *whenever there was nothing to do at home*,— which, as may be readily imagined, was not often.

Seldom as it was, though, so well did the delighted child employ her mind, her hands, and her time,— so industriously did she work with the books, and copy-books, and ink and pens, that the more wealthy children gladly lent her,—that it was not long before she was able to assist even “Miss Liese” herself with her exercises and lessons. The master often gave them questions in arithmetic to work out at home, and in the late afternoons, when the work was all done and the house cleaned up, Margelte would climb to her perch in the linden-tree, and labor over her slate until the question was answered ; then with a shout of—“I’ve got it! I’ve got it!” she would leap to the ground, and dance over the grass in delight. But, to tell the truth, it was not much sympathy that she got for her success in such matters : George sometimes would

let her explain to him the difficulties of the sum, and show him how she got the answer and how she proved it; but study was a thing about which not even George gave himself much concern, and as to the rest, they never thought of it.

Hanne, the younger of the two servant-maids, and the one who had been so desirous of going to America, was in the habit of going to the town with the butter and eggs that were to be sold, and when the quantity was large, Margelte was sent to help her carry them. For a long time the house-mother, whose butter was much sought after, had been greatly dissatisfied that the amount she received for it had been so small; but still her confidence in Hanne was not in the least shaken, for she thought she had *proved* her to be a true-hearted, honest maiden; so when Hanne said, "Indeed, aunt, nobody pays me as much for things as they used to give!" the mistress felt sure that it was so.

Margelte, however, soon observed that Hanne did not give the house-mother all of even what she did get, and that she carried a little purse of her own; this secret weighed

heavily on her little heart. One day, as they were returning from the town, Hanne was joined by a friend of hers who lived near, but was to sail the very next day for America, and they began to talk about the pleasures and advantages of the New World.

"*I shall never be able to go!*" said Hanne, with a sigh. "It takes so long to get together money enough to pay the passage; in the city you can get it faster."

"Yes," replied the town-servant, "wages are higher in the city; but then in the country there are so many things to be sold that you can easily make a little profit in one way or another!" Hanne would not agree to this, and soon after they parted; the town-girl went into the house of her employer, and Hanne took the road back to the farm.

"I should be very much afraid," said Margelte, thoughtfully, "to go to America, — to cross that great, big water."

"Why, yes," said Hanne, "it must be a little frightful; but then when you're once over it, you'll never think of it again."

"But there's many a ship lost in going over," persisted the little girl, shaking her

head incredulously: "many a one goes to the bottom!"

"And many a one goes safely too; and many a one comes back safely to tell of it," said Hanne, coolly.

"I wonder," continued the child, "whether it's true what they say."

"Whether what's true? What do they say?" asked Hanne.

"Why, that every vessel goes to the bottom that has on board dishonest money," answered Margelte.

"What do you call dishonest money?" asked Hanne, with some little alarm in her manner.

"Money got by cheating, or robbing, or any other way that is n<sup>t</sup> honest," answered Margelte. "You know sometimes people's fathers and mothers die while the children are too little to take care of their property, so they leave word for some one else to do it; and then it often happens that, instead of doing it honestly and spending it for the children, they keep it all themselves, and leave the children poor. Well, such money, or what they get by any kind of cheating,

they say will sink a ship when she gets just half-way across ; — there 'll be a storm, and down she 'll go ! ” The last part of the legend was added by the little girl herself, to see how far she had touched her companion's conscience.

“ Bah ! I don't believe a word of it ! ” exclaimed Hanne, though at the same time she seemed very nervous. “ It is n't possible that there should be any ship going across without some such money on board, carrying such crowds as they do.”

“ I don't know,” persisted Margelte : “ I asked the schoolmaster about it once, and he said he did not know whether that was exactly true ; but he knew another thing just as bad that way, — and what I asked him about was a kind of pattern of it. That was, that, in our voyage over the sea of life into the regions of eternity, every kreutzer dishonestly come by would keep weighing upon the soul heavier and heavier, and dragging it down deeper and deeper, until at last it sank into Hell.”

Hanne did not say another word ; she went home, and when she paid into the hands of

the house-mother the money she had gotten for the butter, eggs, and cream that she had sold, the good woman was utterly astonished at the largeness of the sum, and wondered what could have happened to raise the market-prices so suddenly. Margelte slept upon a little straw pallet in the room with the house-maids, and that night she saw and heard Hanne tossing and tumbling on her bed in the most uncomfortable manner. At last the girl got up, went to her chest, and began to count over some money; but as Margelte kept very still, Hanne thought she was asleep and did not see her.

The next morning, while Hanne was hanging out the wet clothes that had just been washed, Margelte went to her and asked,—“Will you hear if I know my verses? It’s almost school-time.” Hanne was very willing to oblige her, and Margelte handed her the verse-book and began to repeat: “‘What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul? Or, what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?’”

“Well, that’s very well,” said Hanne. “Now, the next.”

“‘Let none among you suffer as a murderer or a thief, or a busy-body in other men’s matters; but if he suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed.’”

Hanne, this time, did not lift her eyes from the book, but Margelte went on:—“‘Let him that hath stolen, steal no more; but rather let him labor, working with his hands the thing that is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth.’ And now comes the last,” said Margelte, for Hanne had not yet looked up or spoken:—“‘Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, behold I will make thee a ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!’”

“The little hussy did that on purpose,” thought Hanne to herself as Margelte took the book, and, thanking her for her help, danced off. But the next Sunday, Hanne went to the church, a thing she had not done for a long time. A few days after this the house-mother called her husband in, in great astonishment.

“Stöffe! come here, quick! What think you? As I was just now cleaning out my

milk-can bin, I found in it this roll of money! Fifteen gulden! Good coin from the mint! I've been thinking over and over again if I could have put it there myself, and I'm a'most sure I never did!"

"Oh, perhaps the Brownies \* did," replied Stöffele, with a laugh. "Or, maybe, my old

\* The Brownies, so called from being always dressed in clothes of the same color as the earth in which they lived, and who are known to the Germans as "Kobolde," were a race of fairies supposed to pass their whole lives underground, working very hard to make all manner of beautiful and useful things out of the metals they found there; and sometimes, when they wished to deceive mortals, they would make the needed articles of straw, leaves, &c., &c., and give them the appearance of being manufactured of gold, silver, or precious stones. Having to work so hard themselves, they were thought to feel a particular kindness for mortals who had to do so; and therefore if a poor farmer, or an honest laboring woman, unable to hire help, had yet more than they could do themselves, the Brownies would come in the night and do it for them, always taking care to be off before daylight. Where they had once done this, they were pretty sure to come again; and so, to insure their kind assistance, whoever was obliged, after honest effort, to go to bed and leave part of his or her work undone, would leave, too, on the table, a loaf of bread and a bowl of milk for the refreshment of "the little people," which was another of their names. This was a treat which greatly delighted them, for they were thought to be exceedingly fond of milk, and were often accused of sucking dry a rich farmer's cows in revenge for any unkindness he had shown to a poor one. The poor were their favorites.

godmother, who has been dead so many years, has repented of having hidden away her money as she did, and brought you some of it for good luck. I suppose you can use it, at any rate."

"Yes, indeed!" said the wife, delightedly. "It is a most useful bit of good luck, and it comes so unexpectedly!" — an assertion to which Stöffele had nothing to object.

From that day Hanne seemed like another creature; she grew brighter and more lively, and was as merry as a lark, and as obliging to everybody as Margelte herself. One day she said, laughingly, to the little one: "Margelte, when I go to America the ship will float lightly enough, for not a dishonest kreutzer will there be in my pocket."

Now the little queen might well have felt proud enough that she had made a grown-up woman ashamed of having done wrong, and led her to make amends for her fault; most children would have felt so, but Margelte did not. When she had first found out that Hanne was taking and hoarding up money that did not belong to her, she prayed to the dear God, to whom she went with all her

troubles, softly in her heart, to teach her the right way to put a stop to it without betraying the poor girl to her mistress. So God, as He has said He always will, answered her prayers; and by the words she, a simple little child, had uttered, had touched a conscience that had remained unmoved by the daily house-worship of her master's family and the many earnest appeals and prayers of the faithful church-pastor. For this the grateful orphan thanked her Heavenly Father with a full heart, but she never said a word about it to any living creature.

The peasant was exceedingly nervous in his fears of fire, and very strict in not allowing the least spark to be taken into stable or barns. Melcher, the farm-boy, however, troubled himself very little about that, and lighted his pipe in stable or shed, by night or by day, whenever he found himself alone. The heavy step of the peasant or his wife he could hear far enough off to give him time to stick it away in some hiding-place or another until they were out of sight again. The light-footed Margelte, though, who was sent everywhere at all times, had seen this

for a long while, but she knew she should get her ears boxed if she undertook to remonstrate with the lad, — and worse, if she told of him. So once more she went to her dear and unfailing Friend, the dear God in Heaven, and asked for guidance and discretion in this matter also.

It was winter, and the servants were in the habit of sitting all the evening in the warm spinning-room, where, one night, they were all talking about a poor man who had that day been taken to the village mad-house. Each one in turn had some story of the same kind to relate, and at last it came to Margelte's turn: to her they always listened with great attention, for her stories were always interesting and always well told.

"My mother," said the little girl, "once knew a person — indeed it was a person with whom she once lived at service in her youth — who was in just such a state as poor Carl Brenner was to-day; but they always let him go about just where he chose, and he never did any one any harm. He was always as pale as death, and did nothing the whole day long but lug about pails of water;

it seemed as if he could not bear to stop doing that one thing, and the maids all through that neighborhood got him to bring water for them. When night came, they had to lock him in the house ; but before he went to bed, he would blow out every light, and put out every spark of fire he could get at. He never talked to any one, and hardly ever answered a question ; but once a year he would rush about the whole day in the wildest way, and cry ‘ Fire ! Fire ! ’ with a sad kind of a howl that went to your very heart.”

“ How did he come to be so ? ” asked some one with a shudder, in which all the rest joined.

“ He was the son of a rich peasant,” replied Margelte, “ and in spite of all his father said never could be made to take the least care about lights and fires ; he would go all about with a lighted pipe in his mouth, and carry a burning candle into the barns and stables with as little hesitation as into the kitchen. How it happened no one ever knew, but one night he must have dropped a spark without seeing it ; it smouldered and smouldered for a long time, and about the middle of the night out it burst !

“As it had been a very dry season, and there was little water to be had, by the time the people got there, the fire had spread so wide that it was too late to do anything; and the house and the barn were burned to the ground, and all the poor animals that were in them were burned to death. Well, in the confusion, none of the family were missed; everybody supposed they were somewhere else; but when the day came, nothing was to be seen of his mother and the baby. This son, almost crazy with fear, looked everywhere himself, and at last they were found under some burnt beams that had fallen upon them. The mother had the dear little baby hugged up tight in her arms, but they were both so black and burned that hardly any one would have known them. The son buried them with his own hands, so that no one should see them; but from that hour he was as crazy as I told you, and all the doctors they could get together could n't help him.”

When Margelte stopped, there was a dead silence. Melcher's pipe had gone out, but he did n't seem to notice it; and when he went to the stable to look round before going to

bed, instead of sticking it, as usual, into his pocket, he left it lying on the stove. The next evening, before he went out to the barns, he said to Caspar, "Here! you take my pipe and keep it until I come back; I'm afraid of dropping the fire." And for two whole weeks he never once attempted to smoke as long as he was in any of the out-buildings.

Thus Margelte, by the guidance of her Heavenly Counsellor, though only a little charity-child, reigned as a queen over all about her,—and with the brute creation she did still more. With them she was a queen in right earnest. When Liese went into the barn-yard to feed the poultry, at her call they would come fluttering and running from all quarters; but in the midst of the meal, if Margelte's voice was but heard, "Come! luck, luck, luck, luck!" in an instant they left all, and came flying towards her,—hens, ducks, pigeons,—all and everything, and perched upon her head and shoulders, and would have eaten from her hand if she could but have waited for them.

The peasant had a small flock of sheep that he had given in charge to a very compe-

tent farm-hand, but he had had very poor luck. All kinds of diseases had broken out among them, and carried off one after another until only four remained. So Stöffele concluded that keeping sheep, however profitable his neighbors seemed to make it, was rather poor business for him, and determined to give it up. But Margelte had heard a good deal upon this subject, and by no means agreed with him; she declared it was much cheaper to raise one's own mutton and wool than to buy them; and so she begged to be allowed to try her hand at it. Behind the ditch where the willows grew was a bit of grass that seemed to be of no great value; this she thought would be a good place to pasture them.

The peasant laughed heartily at her proposal. "Yes," said he, "you will look after the sheep, but who after you?"

"Oh, *I*, cousin, shall not need any looking after; just those few sheep, and so near the house! When I have to take them farther away, then somebody can look after me."

She was so earnest that the peasant consented, and the first sunny day off went Mar-

gelte with her sheep, and a shepherd's crook a good deal longer than herself; she paid no heed to the jokes and jeers of the servants, but decked herself out to the best of her means, and then took her seat upon a little hillock in the centre of the piece of grass; from this spot she could see every part of the field, and watch at her ease her new pets, who soon learned to follow her wherever she went.

After a short time the flock was increased by the birth of a lamb, and then how she rejoiced! She tended it as if it had been a little baby, and very triumphantly did she look about her when she led out a flock of five instead of four. She nursed and petted the little thing all day, and when she went home at night, with her black hair encircled by the crown of flowers that she had made, she carried it in her arms that nothing might happen to it, and that it should not tire itself out by trying to keep up with its mother.

The mother-sheep, however, did not seem to think this precaution necessary, — or, perhaps, she was afraid that little Margelte was going to take away her little one, — for she

trotted along as close to her as she could walk, and kept looking up in her face in the most pitiful manner, and bleating and baa-ing; and the little lamb stuck out its head and looked down at her, and seemed to have a very great inclination to jump down and trot along too. But Margelte laughed at them both. "For shame, old sheep," said she, "with your baa-ing! You ought to be glad that I carry your baby for you, for you cannot do it for yourself, you are so old and so stupid! Don't you see that I am not doing either of you the least harm? And you, little lamb, do you just keep still until I get you home, and then I will put you on the ground, and you may do as much jumping and running as you like!"

I don't know whether or not sheep can understand what is said to them, but, little by little, Margelte's sheep became quite reconciled to her ways, and let her do as she chose without making any objections.

To the school Margelte had seldom, indeed, been able to go since she had been a shepherdess, but she never failed to learn carefully the lessons that were given to the class, and



**MARGELTE CARRYING HOME THE LAMB** *Page 32*



on this account she liked the lonely days in the sheep-pasture much better than she did those during which she was employed in the house. Any one who was listening at a little distance would have thought that there was a church somewhere in the neighborhood, for the first thing she did when she got to the field — and she went there very early — was to sit down upon her hillock and sing a pretty morning-hymn ; then, in a loud, clear voice, she repeated all the verses she knew by heart, and it sounded just like preaching ; and all this time the child's heart was as peaceful and holy as many a church, for the dear God had taken up His abode in it. So calm, so contented was this little destitute orphan, — so satisfied for all that her Heavenly Father had given her, — that often and often she could not think what in this wide world she wanted more than she had. It is very doubtful if ever a queen upon her throne was as perfectly happy as this little charity-child in her lonely pasture-field.

The old grandmother had not been at first very kind to Margelte. To be sure, the old lady had very much liked Christel, the

spinning-woman, Margelte's mother, and had found her always very useful and obliging; but that was no reason why, now that she was dead and buried, they should be burdened with her child. To her, a rich peasant-woman, and descended from a long line of ancestors every one of whom had been rich peasants, there was an unspeakable difference between the poor orphan and the children of her son. She thought that the girl ought to have been sent to the work-house, "where she would be properly broken in," as granny expressed it, and made fit to be taken, one of these days, by some one as a servant, — which was, of course, her proper place.

The gentle but lively temperament of the little creature had, all along, sorely annoyed her; when she heard the little voice carolling the light, gay song, the old woman's heart was ready to burst with spite and vexation that a miserable beggar-child like that, who owned no more in all the wide world than could be stowed away in a small trunk, should dare to be so merry and light-hearted. "Yes!" she would say, with a sneer, "sing away, it's all you *can* do!" And still more

outrageous was she when she heard Margelte every morning telling her dreams. Such a piece of impertinence as it was for the little hussy to dream at all,—much less to talk about it afterwards!

But after a while all this was changed; she soon saw, hard as she tried to shut her eyes to the fact, how industrious the little girl was, and how watchful of everything connected with the interests of the house or the family; and felt obliged, whether she wanted to or not, to treat her with more kindness. Granny, although very near the grave, for she was a very old woman, was not a Christian; she had not, like the orphan Margelte, set God always before her eyes, to acknowledge Him in all her ways; her greatest trust and most constant thought was her money, and those who had none she looked upon as unworthy her notice, and treated as if they had no feelings. There was one little Bible verse that was always uppermost in Margelte's mind, but never entered granny's; it was this: "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct thy paths;"—and that one verse made all the difference be-

tween the two , made the one constantly win friends, and the other as constantly lose them.

Granny was fast becoming old and infirm ; she could no longer work, but loved to sit upon the bench before the house - door in the sunshine, and feel her blood move more quickly in the pleasant warmth. The daughter-in-law, who had taken the place of house-mother, of course, since granny had been forced to give it up, did n't like to show how much it vexed her to see the old body always sitting there, and thus keeping possession of the most pleasant spot ; for the old mother had a snug little property of her own, which she was free to leave to whom she pleased, and therefore must be treated with great respect. But the poor old body was very helpless now ; she could no longer dress or undress herself, or go alone up the steps that led to her little bedroom ; but she was obliged sometimes to wait a long and weary time until her daughter-in-law thought she could make it convenient to come and help her. When she was longer than usual in coming, she would pretend to think that she thought some one else had done it, and as she came

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in would put up her hands in surprise, and exclaim, " Well, I declare ! are you waiting here yet, granny ? Why, Liese, what in the world have you been about ? Why have n't you been here helping your grandmother ? "

Liese would answer, — when she took the trouble to answer at all, — " I thought Hanne had seen to her ! " And Hanne, when appealed to, thought her mistress had attended to the matter.

Margelte had gone out so early with her sheep every day, that she had no opportunity of seeing all this ; but when a severe storm came that kept them all at home for a day or two, she soon saw how affairs stood with poor granny, and from that time forth stopped every morning to dress the old woman, and help her down-stairs to her pleasant bench before the door, before she set out. How could granny feel the soft, warm rays shining on her poor old body, without thinking of the kind-hearted little girl who thus repaid her for all the unkind things she had said and done to her ? Had she been a Christian woman, she would have offered up many a prayer for the poor moth-

erless child ; but as it was, she only "*wondered*" how the child could so soon have forgotten her ill treatment.

Granny was quite deaf, too, and, like all other old people, was very curious to hear what was going on : whenever she heard any noise in the spinning-room, the sound of voices talking, and especially any good, hearty shouts of laughter, she would look eagerly from one to the other, and ask, — "What?" "How?" "What are they saying?" and so on. Now and then one of them would stop and bawl a few words in her ear, but she saw very plainly that *that* was not all ; and often the poor old creature concluded within herself that it was not worth while to inquire anything more. But now Margelte would come with her spindle and sit close to her. The child had a soft, sweet voice, as clear as the ring of a bell, and would repeat to her all that had been said, and do it in so droll a manner as to make the others redouble their screams of laughter, and old granny joined in with them, the most amused and delighted of the party. On Sunday she would lead her out

into the little garden, and though it obliged her to stay home from church, read to her from the New Testament, or a sermon, or some prayers, and repeat the most beautiful hymns she knew. Thus the rich old peasant-woman and the orphan charity-child became firm friends. It was strange to hear that little creature teaching her aged companion the way to Heaven, and stranger still to see how the old woman hung upon every word the child said when, as she often used to do, she prayed to the dear and holy Saviour "to open poor granny's heart, and help her to understand the Bible."

It was pure kindness of heart that made Margelte take so much pains to make poor granny happy, and yet there was another reason why she liked to be with her; she could talk to her about her own dear mother, whom every one else seemed to have quite forgotten. To be sure, it was not a great deal that even granny knew to tell. "Your mother," said she once, "was born in this town, but went away when she was in her fourteenth year. Honor be to her memory! She was always a little proud and stuck up,

and had a great longing for the city. It was said that she got into the service of great people, and went with them somewheres a great ways off, so for a long, long time nothing more was heard of her.

“But after full four-and-twenty years she came back with you, and neither of you looked as if things had been going very well. She was still sick, for she had had the small-pox, which had pitted her face very much, and you were a miserable-looking little thing, about two years old. Who your father was, I don’t rightly know, but I believe he was a soldier; she never said much about him, nor about her master and mistress, only that they had not treated her well. The small-pox had left her nearly blind, so that all she could do was to spin; but as she was a master-hand at that, she always got plenty of work about here. She never got perfectly well, and when she died, my daughter-in-law took you, which made me angry enough at the time, but I don’t know what I should have done now without you.”

This was all that Margelte could ever learn about her parents; but she thought it over

again and again, and filled up the gaps with all manner of strange and wonderful things from her own imagination. Her dream that she was a queen, with a golden crown upon her head, often came into her mind, she did not know why, and so did all the wonderful stories she had ever read of high-born children who had been carried off in their childhood, and passed their lives in obscurity. Particularly when she was alone in the field watching her sheep, with no employment but knitting, would her busy brain be filled with such things; but then, too, in the midst of them, she would remember what the church-pastor said once when he preached to the school-children, and which she had thought of many times since;—he had said: “My dear children, remain gladly in your lowly station, and thank the dear God that he has put you there, for there you are free from those dreadful temptations that beset the rich and great; be more careful to become wise than to grow rich, and you will have a rich reward hereafter.” Then she would make a wreath of daisies and put it on her head, and exclaim, — “Here I am! Queen Margelte!”



## CHAPTER II.



ANY pleasant years passed for those who lived at the farm, and Margelte — still “Poor Margelte, the charity-child,” when Liese or the house-mother spoke of her to those before whom they wished to appear of importance—had grown to be a pretty, bright-looking, active girl, with her clear, honest eyes still undimmed, and her skilful hand still more useful and handy. She was a neat, delicate, pretty girl, and even when sent to sweep out the stable, or scatter manure in the field, was far more refined and lady-like in her appearance than many a rich girl in the ball-room. A little queen she was, indeed, although the willing servant of the whole family. The peasant did nothing that he wanted particularly well done without her advice ; the house-mother unhesitatingly left house and barn-yard to her care whenever a

christening or a church-festival tempted her from home. The servants all loved her, for she shrunk from no kind of work, took her share willingly of all that was to be done, and never got angry at their blunders; and to poor old granny, who was now seldom able to leave her little room, she was a ministering angel. There was not one in the house that looked upon her unkindly,—not one who was not willing to be her subject.

Liese, too, had grown to be a tall, stout girl, and was very anxious to be considered pretty. It was no fault of her own if she was not admired, for she wore the most brightly colored handkerchiefs pinned around her neck, and hung herself about with ribbons and collars, and all other kinds of finery in great abundance; but it was, as everybody said, of no use;—when she strutted about on Sundays with her new red calico gown, the boys followed her and cried “Fire!” while Margelte, in her short homespun skirt and black bodice, the clean linen chemise, and little, black quilted cap, looked a thousand times more beautiful. In every

movement Liese was awkward and clumsy, and more than once heard it whispered, — “The young lady is not half so well-looking or genteel as the maid!”

Margelte never went to the dance, but Liese did very often, and was always asked, “Why did you not bring your pretty maid with you?” It made her very angry to be questioned in this way, as if she were going out in the company of a charity-girl! Nor was that her only annoyance. Margelte had so pleasant a face, such agreeable manners, and so lady-like an air, that people were always taking her for the daughter of the house, even though Liese stood there dressed out in her gayest finery. All this vexed Liese beyond description; she hated Margelte, and did all she could to harm her; and to be hated by any one is a gnawing worm to a warm heart, however undeserved the hatred may be.

With George the case was entirely different. He had become a fine-looking young man, and an excellent farmer; but he was very still and reserved, and used as few words as possible. He was now old enough to marry,

and his father was very desirous that he should bring into the house some rich and important peasant's daughter. But he was resolved to do no such thing,—no matter how often his father took him to the different houses in the neighborhood, or how much vexed they seemed to be at his delay. At last he said to his mother in confidence :—  
“Mother, I will do nothing, will bring no wife into the house, without your consent ; but go where I will, I see nobody to compare with Margelte, — so lively, so industrious, so sensible and sweet-tempered. I know well that it would not be proper to marry her, but as long as I cannot find another like her, I should prefer not to marry.”

The more innocent Margelte was, the more angry were the parents that that poor girl should be the means of preventing their son from taking a wife suitable to his wealth and position. Liese saw it all, and, stupid as she was about other things, she was cunning enough to keep her father and mother in a state of constant excitement ; indeed, she was the most interested person in the whole matter, and managed to insinuate herself

into the good graces of every one, or at least tried to, even with poor old granny, — who, she was very much afraid, was going to make Margelte her heir, — and whom she tried in every way to convince that there would be no peace in the house as long as that girl remained in it.

Margelte soon saw how matters stood, — that the feelings of all were changed towards her; and she saw, too, the reason. It was not her nature to live in the midst of strife as long as there was any way of escaping from it, and she began to think what that way should be.

One very fine Sunday, granny sat once more in the garden, and Margelte was reading the Bible to her. It was the story of Abraham, — how the Lord gave him the command, “Go out from thy country and thy people into a land which I will show unto thee!” Margelte let the book fall upon her lap, as she asked, “What do you think, granny? If I should go out from my people and my country, will the Lord lead me to the place where I ought to go?”

“What do you mean, Mädél?” asked the

old woman in alarm ; “ you do not mean to go away ? ”

“ I don’t know,” replied Margelte. “ I don’t know where I should go ; but the lady in the town to whom I carry butter knows a very nice service-place for me ; and I thought I had better take it than stay here, now that everything is so changed,” — and she began to cry.

“ You are right, you poor child ! everything is changed ; old and stupid as I am, I can see that,” said granny. “ But it is no fault of yours, and you are quite right to go instead of staying here to be domineered over by everybody. What will become of me when you are gone, only the dear God knows ! But I know very well why they want to drive you away from me : only — they will find themselves mistaken.”

When the peasant and his wife heard of Margelte’s resolution, they were much alarmed, for well they knew that they could get no one to supply her place ; her watchful eye and skilful hand could not be easily replaced. At first they rated her soundly as a most ungrateful wretch, for leaving those

who had done so much for her, and raised her, as they said, "out of the dirt!" After thinking longer of it, however, they concluded that it was best she should go, and freely gave her their consent.

When the day came for her to leave, it seemed as if everything were forgotten, and the whole farm was a scene of grief,—as though they were all taking leave of a dear friend. The younger children clung screaming to her skirts, and would not quit their hold. The house-mother was constantly thrusting something into her bundles,—ample folds of fine linen, or some dried fruit, lest she should get hungry on her way; and thus she sought to conceal her grief and express her love. Stöffele and his son George had taken leave of her early in the morning, before they went into the field; but under pretence that he had forgotten something, the peasant came back again, and, as he again shook hands with her, he slipped a dollar into her fingers, and said, "There,—that is for a keepsake. And if things do not go well with you, just come back again, at any hour, by night or by day; you know that here is your home."

The farm-servant, and the maid—for since Margelte had grown up they had kept but one—wept with the rest; only Liese remained gladly in her room, and at parting hardly gave Margelte her hand; while the latter bade her adieu with these words: “Forgive me, Liese, if at any time I have done you any harm, and do not lay it up against me.”

The last thing Margelte did was to run off to the room where sat poor old granny, the most sorrowful of all. “I shall not be here long after you are gone,” said the poor old woman. “Trust in the dear God, Margelte, as you have always done. He will take care of you.”

“Granny,” said Margelte, “I want you to make me a promise.”

“Well, what is it?” demanded the old lady.

“Well, granny, I know that you have some little money, and that you want things to go well with me in this world; but if you have had it in your mind to leave any of your money to me when you die, I beg earnestly that you won’t do it.

I'll take it just as kindly as if you had, but I beg you, granny, grant my request if you love me,—and you do,—don't you, granny?"

"You little goose!" said granny; "never in my life did I hear any one ask such a thing! Now you are young and strong, to be sure; but if you live as long as I have, the time will come when you will be very glad to have a little laid by."

"If I work as long as I am able, and pray as I ought to the dear God, He will not let me starve, nor leave me to beg when I am old. That I am very sure of. They shall never have it to say that I took care of you and treated you kindly for the sake of what you had to leave!"

"Yes, yes! you are not so wrong, after all, and it shall be as you say," replied granny. "But, tell me,—beside a little bit of pride, you've got that 'Queen' in your head yet, haven't you? Girl! don't let yourself be tempted by the Evil One! and do nothing foolish with those 'great-folks' thoughts of yours that you are so full of!"

"If the dear God has anything wonderful

in store for me," said Margelte, with the crimson blood rushing to her face, "He Himself will find a way to bring it about. He won't leave me to look for it."

"So, so," murmured the old woman to herself. "So, so; she had n't forgotten it yet! Look here, Margelte," she added, aloud; "I won't leave you anything, if you would rather have it so; but there is my little book with the silver clasp,—that I will give you to remember me by; it was given me a long, long time ago, by my mother, but I don't need it any longer; there is one verse that I have marked and turned down for you to think of when all those thoughts about great folks come into your head, for it tells about the right kind of greatness. You taught me, Margelte, though you were a little child and I a grown-up woman, how to go to my Saviour, and for it, if for nothing else, may His blessing rest ever upon you! May the peace that I have found through your teachings be yours forever."

Margelte read the verse marked down:—

"Grant, Lord, unto my prayers,  
A royal, noble soul,—

A regal heart, such as beseems  
One who is wedded to thy cross, —  
A heart that spurns what earth esteems  
Most rich and great, as naught but dross ! ”

This she read over and over again, and it went to her heart. She went away loaded with granny's blessings and good wishes ; the children accompanied her to the bounds of the farm ; then they all took leave of her, and she went on alone. She had not gone far though, when, under a tree, she saw George waiting for her ; but quite unable to say a word for his tears, he could only hold out his hand to her. Margelte's heart was as full as his. “ God bless you, George ! Be a good son to your father and mother,” said she, and passed on.

But when, with her little heart bursting with sorrow, she came to the town-gate, and was striving to make her way through the crowd that was pouring into it, she was quite surprised to hear all the bells ringing loudly. She could not imagine the reason of it, for it was not a church-day, and thought that perhaps there was a funeral. But the sound of the bells filled her with



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trust. "There is one God over us all," said she, "and a church everywhere, so one is never alone." And calmly, as though she knew just what awaited her and was quite contented to meet it, the little Queen entered her new kingdom.





### CHAPTER III.



OWN-LIFE and town-service were like a new world to Margelte, and it needed some little time for her to become accustomed to them. But whoever seeks earnestly to fulfil the duties intrusted to him, and finds pleasure in so doing, will not long remain awkward. The Colonel's lady soon began to boast to her friends what a neat, willing, handy, and obliging servant she had found, and the Colonel himself was much delighted with the quiet, unobtrusive way in which she taught the other maids in the house, by her own example, to pay proper respect to their employers. Just as a lady takes pride in decorating her drawing-room, so did Margelte in the neatness and cleanliness of her bright, pleasant-looking kitchen; and the more carefully she studied, by the strictest economy, to promote the interests of

her master, the more readily did her mistress consent to add, from time to time, to the kitchen-furniture such articles as she thought would be desirable.

But the Colonel did not long remain in the little town, which was not far from the farm; he was obliged to go to the Capital, taking his family and, of course, the indispensable Margelte with him, so that she was able to pay but one visit to the old home for which she still felt a strong affection. She left granny at the point of death, and it was a comfort to her to know that the poor old woman would have gone to her rest before she was removed so far from her.

But if Margelte had admired the wonders and beauties of the town, who can describe her astonishment and admiration of the wide streets and splendid buildings of the Capital; and when she had seen even the outside of the King's palace, how heartily she laughed to herself at the remembrance of her dream, and the fancies she had built upon it!

The Colonel's family occupied a large, well-furnished house, and Margelte was at no loss

to find companions in the neighborhood. The stylish servants of the square were very kind, and tried very kindly to introduce her to what they considered as the pleasures and enjoyments of city-life. "Are you going to the market?" asked one of them, one day, stopping at the garden-gate with a basket on her arm.

"Yes," replied Margelte, rather annoyed, however, that her new acquaintance, in accosting her, had used the word *Sie* (you), as if it had been one lady speaking to another, instead of the less pretending *Du* (thou), by which persons of their class always address each other, and are addressed by those above them. Nor is it as a mark of contempt that a house-mistress says to her servant *Du*, instead of *Sie*, which she would say to her visitor; it is rather as a kind familiarity, for it is thus that dear and intimate friends always address each other; while *Sie* is employed only in cases of ceremony and politeness, in speaking with strangers, with those in whom the speaker feels but little interest, or in expressing displeasure at those to whom one is accustomed, at other times, to say *Du*. No

wonder, then, that Margelte felt somewhat vexed at the foolish airs of her neighbor; she showed her good sense by not following the example, and the girl dropped it.

“How much market-money were you able to make in L.?” asked the stranger, this time more modestly saying *Du*.

“Market-money? And what is that?” asked Margelte.

“Oh, now! Don’t pretend such stupid innocence! Every one knows well enough what that is!” answered her companion. “Why, you know that butter and eggs bring different prices almost every day, and everybody, naturally enough, wants to buy them as cheaply as possible; so when you go to reckon up with your mistress, you just make out that you got a kreutzer or two less than you really did, and keep that for yourself. And you have a right to it; you earn it by trying to get as much as you can for your things: in that way you make a few kreutzers every week, and you would n’t believe what a nice little sum it comes to at the end of the year,—while the mistress does n’t miss it, and knows nothing about it.”

Margelte felt no temptation to try any such deception; she was quite disgusted with the bare thought of it; but she concluded, at first, that perhaps it would be better, for the sake of good feeling, not to make any reply, but to act as if she had not heard the remark. The "royal spirit," however, rose within her, and turning to her companion, she said,—"God keep me from such an act! It is as much stealing as if the money were taken out of the mistress' chest. Are you not afraid that the kreutzers you make in that way will make you lose dollars honestly earned?" and turning her back upon her new acquaintance, she found her way to the market by herself.

Another one of her new friends invited her to an afternoon walk on a holiday in one of the city gardens. It is a very usual thing in Germany, where the poorer people have so very little time to enjoy themselves, for peaceable, orderly people to go and take a quiet walk in the public squares and gardens on a holiday, not to indulge in dissipation, by any means, but for a sight of the fresh green grass, and a breath of the sweet, pure air that

the dear God has bestowed upon his world. This holiday proved to be a clear, bright, sunny day in March, and Margelte, who pined for the fresh air, willingly accepted the invitation. At first she enjoyed it very much; there were many neat, cheerful-looking maids there, sitting upon the benches, or walking up and down the paths, laughing and chatting together; it brought to Margelte's mind the calm, quiet Sundays in the country, where everything was so peaceful, and the air so sweet, and it made her feel almost homesick.

Presently, however, some of the soldiers came and began to amuse themselves with the girls; they invited them to drink beer, and then they got to dancing. Poor Margelte! How shocked she was to see such rude gayeties as these, and how dreadfully ashamed to find herself in such company! By and by, a noisy Corporal, thinking he was doing the strange servant a great honor, began to compliment her on her good looks, and asked her to dance with him. Suddenly the gay, merry music seemed to ring out granny's hymn,—"A regal heart, such as

becomes," &c., &c., — and she coolly replied, "Thank you, sir; I would rather not accept the invitation."

"Ah!" said the offended Corporal, turning towards the rest, "the young woman seems to have made a mistake; she thought she was coming to church!"

"I think, myself, that I *have* made a mistake," said Margelte, quietly, and she got up and walked out of the garden; but wild and rude as the party had become, not one ventured to ridicule or follow her.

The Colonel's wife was a most excellent lady, but her husband's position obliged her to keep up a large circle of acquaintances, which kept her almost constantly engaged with visits and "land-parties," as they are called in Germany, — a mode of amusement resembling our picnics. This she deeply regretted, because it obliged her sometimes to neglect her husband and children. During the week the children were at school, and on leisure afternoons they either visited, or received the visits of other children, as is customary in their country, or went with their parents to walk and enjoy the fresh air; but

on Sunday mornings the whole house was in an uproar with their noisy play, and their quarrels over their toys.

"Marie!" Alfred would exclaim, "what are you doing with those building-blocks? Girls don't build! Give them to me this instant!"

"Well, I will," replies Marie, "if you will give me back my porcelain figures."

"No," says Alfred; "I want them myself; they must stand up in the balcony of my house when I get it built."

While this was going on in one part of the nursery, little Melanie, from another, screamed out that "Gustave had taken her pretty dolly, and was going to paint whiskers and moustaches on her face." Marie, in revenge, knocked down Alfred's half-built house, and in a few moments there was a real tumult, such as all their sport ended with, of one kind or another.

For some time Margelte saw all this with pain, and knowing well that the mother could not help it, turned over in her own mind the best way of putting a stop to it. At the farm the children were no angels, but the peasant

and his wife had never suffered such an uproar and confusion in the house at any time, least of all on Sundays. "H-s-h, children! This is Sunday!" was a cry to which they were taught to pay immediate attention.

One Sunday morning Margelte determined to see what could be done, and making more than usual haste to get through with her few duties on that day, she went directly to the nursery. The children were all very fond of her, and she found herself in the midst of half a dozen drawn battles. "Hi, hi!" she exclaimed, looking round her in pretended astonishment. "What kind of play do you call this? If this is your fashion of amusing yourselves,—and on Sunday too,—I must say I don't admire it. Now when we were all children at the farm, our Sunday mornings were the most delightful time of the whole week. We did n't play, for we had nothing to play with, so we did n't care to."

"That must have been having *very* nice times, to be sure!" said Alfred contemptuously.

"We did, then, whether you believe it or

not," replied Margelte. "In the first place, if they would n't take us to church, we had a church of our own at home: the great tree in the door-yard was the roof,—because it spread its branches so nicely over our heads; the top of the tree was the steeple; and the shade on the ground, where we sat, was the church-floor. First we sang all the most lovely hymns we could find. Oh, but I believe you can't sing much!" she added, hesitatingly.

"Can't sing!" exclaimed Marie, indignantly,— "and taking lessons from Madame Milano!"

"And in school we sing every day of our lives!" added Alfred, doggedly.

"Oh, well then," said Margelte, as if she felt quite gratified and relieved,— "then I will show you how we used to play church. First, as I said before, we must sing. Since you can sing so nicely, suppose we choose a choral; now let us choose a right pretty one! Suppose we sing— 'How sweetly beams the star of morn!' Now, pay attention. Marie, you sing the second; you, Alfred, sing the tenor; and I will take the air, for I am not

musical scholar enough to sing from the notes ; I can only carry a tune after I have learned it. Now begin."

Margelte, even as she said, was no great musical scholar, but she had a sweet, clear voice, and at once she began singing that exquisite hymn, the children falling in with their appointed parts ; for in German schools the poorest children are taught to read music and sing by note, as regularly as they are to read their Bibles. This, to be sure, was not a very finished performance, for Margelte's voice was untrained, and it was the first time they had ever sung together ; but all parties were highly satisfied, not excepting even Gustave and Melanie, who chose to assist Margelte.

"There," said Margelte, when the hymn ended,—"now we must read."

"Oh, yes, yes !" exclaimed Alfred, in great delight ; "bring Marie's new story-book !"

"What !" cried Margelte, opening her eyes ;—"that, for Sunday ; and in church, too ? Just you wait one moment until I go and get my Bible, and read you something from that ; and then tell me if it is n't pret-

tier than 'Tom Thumb,' and even than 'Cinderella with her Glass Slipper,' besides being all true in the bargain. I'll read 'Joseph.'"

"Pshaw! We knew that by heart long ago!" exclaimed the two elder ones in the same breath. "It's very stupid and tedious."

Margelte opened her eyes still wider. "Tedious? Stupid? That shows that you know very little about it! Why, there is n't another story in the whole world half so beautiful! I think you could not have read it from the right Bible. Just listen once."

She opened the Bible and began to read, while the children all listened with the greatest attention,—the two younger ones, from curiosity to hear the story, the two elder, to find if it were not the same old one that they professed to have so long "known by heart." But Margelte read aloud worse than she did anything else, notwithstanding she had done it so often for poor old granny: her voice was not strong enough. Alfred got quite impatient, and at last declared that he thought he could do it a great deal better; Margelte

had not the least objection to letting him try, and sure enough so he did. When she gave him the book, she was herself quite astonished to hear how clear and distinct his words were, and how exactly he read as if he were talking. The little ones, who had never before heard the story, became so excited that the elder ones were doubly so, and kept saying to them, "Now listen! Now the prettiest part is coming!" and the little things would open their eyes and mouths still wider, and hitch their chairs still closer. Marie, too, wished to show what she could do in the reading line, and so it was agreed to take turns all round.

The story read, Margelte said that the next thing in order was to preach; but as she did n't know how to do that, she would just explain to them a little about the story of Joseph, as the schoolmaster used to do to them when they were children. So she told them how, in that country where Joseph and his brothers lived, a man was thought rich, not according to the money he had, but to the cattle, and sheep, and goats, and camels, and servants that he owned. Joseph's father

was a very rich and great man, and owned great numbers of all these things ; but, like all the rest of his countrymen, even their princes, he sent his own sons out into the fields to take care of them.

The fields, she said, were not large or small bits of land with a fence round each ; the whole country was open, and belonged as much to one man as to another. Wherever there was a large quantity of grass, and of course a nice spring of water, there they would drive their animals, and leave them to enjoy themselves, while the owner's sons, or his servants, or both, watched that no harm befell them ; when the grass was all eaten close, they drove off the animals to some other spot, and left it to grow again : that was the reason, perhaps, that Joseph had to go to two or three different places before he could find his brothers.

Margelte made them observe, too, how the dear God had taken care of little Joseph, and made him a favorite with everybody, wher ever he went, because he was such a dutiful and obedient child to his father, and always spoke the truth ; and how He punished the

brothers for their unkindness to Joseph, and especially for the wicked lie they told their father about the little coat. Even though they did n't tell the lie plainly, but only led their father *to suppose* that they had found the coat in that bloody condition, it was, nevertheless, just as much a lie as if they had *told* him so; and God punished it accordingly. And then, too, see how long it was before the punishment came! Why, every one of them had grown old enough to be married and have children, and Joseph himself, though he went up little by little, had had time to become the greatest man in Egypt except the King. Yet God did n't forget it; it came at last! And so, the schoolmaster used to tell us, it was always. God has told us, in the Ten Commandments, a good many things we must n't do:—we must n't steal, nor lie, nor tell things about other people that are not true,—for that is what it means by “bearing false witness,”—and so on; and if we *do* them, just so surely we may know we will be punished,—even if it don't come for years and years!

Everybody thought that Margelte's “ex-

planations" were almost as interesting as the story, and the Sunday morning passed more quickly than ever one had passed before, and far more pleasantly. The next Sunday they were quite ready for the same employments, and thus many a good seed was sown in their young hearts; upon which the affectionate servant-maid daily besought a merciful God to shed the warmth and dew of His blessing, that they might spring up and bear fruit abundantly. Margelte had founded here another little kingdom, where she reigned as undisputed queen.

The first day that they had moved into their new residence, Margelte had heard a great coughing, hawing, and hemming from the story above; and at last it became so violent that she left what she was doing, and went to see what could be the matter.

Now our little readers must understand that in the large cities of France and Germany a single family seldom occupies a whole house by itself, as in America, — only a few of the most wealthy can afford to do that. Their houses are very large as well as high, and built in such a manner that each

story is like a house by itself, and those who live in the upper ones can go up and down without disturbing or annoying the families below them any more than if they lived in different houses. The richest people in each house live on the first story; those not quite so well off, on the second, and so on; the poorer they are, the higher they live; and so a house in which, on the first floor, you will find a nobleman, will have, in the attic, a poor sewing-girl in one room, a poor band-box-maker in another, a wash-woman in a third, &c., &c. It was thus that Margelte, while warming up the rooms of her mistress, heard all this coughing, from overhead, and ran up to see what it meant.

There sat an old gentleman in a dirty-looking, ragged dressing-gown, in front of his stove, the door of which was open, and he was toiling and striving to kindle some sticks of wood that kept throwing out great quantities of smoke, but positively refused to burn.

“Do you wish to light it, sir?” asked Margelte.

“Indeed, I do,” replied he, looking sor-

rowfully at the opened stove-door, "for I am very cold ; but it is too obstinate ; I can get no fire."

"Let *me* try, sir," said Margelte, pleasantly. The old gentleman readily gave her place, and a strong blast from her sound lungs soon produced a blaze over which the old gentleman rejoiced not a little. Margelte begged that she might be allowed, if her mistress would permit her, to perform that little service for him every morning, — a permission the lady did not hesitate a moment to give.

"Do what you will for him, Margelte," said the kind mistress ; "only bear in mind, my child, that you will receive nothing from him for your services ; from what I have heard of him, he must be very poor." But recompense was not in Margelte's mind.

From the worthy old gentleman, who was the learned Professor, Dr. Wurmer, no one could think what a load was taken when so willing and skilful a person offered to warm his room for him ; he was unboundedly grateful to his new friend, and resolved to become better acquainted with her. He was very old, but a very distinguished scholar, and an

author of some note beside. He wrote, untiringly, — stories for the young, stories for the people, books popular, and books philosophical. He wrote all kinds of things, and gathered his materials from a mass of volumes, new and old, with which his entire bedroom, as well as his ordinary living-room, was so piled up that scarcely could his writing-desk and his bed find a place in this vast sea of learning.

But all his writing did not bring him in even as much as his books had cost him; he was poor, and had not a single relative in the world. His only servant was a small boy, who came three times each week to do his errands; his bed he made himself; his rooms somebody had once cleaned up for him, and the landlord was even now afraid that if somebody did n't do it again, his floors would at last become like the ground itself, from the heaping up of the dirt upon them; but the former cleaning had so dreadfully disturbed the quiet, hard-working old man, that he could not bear to try it again.

It was, indeed, therefore, to the order-loving, neat Margelte to whom the poor land-

lord had communicated his fears, when she obtained permission from the old man one afternoon to dust and arrange his books. She sent him out to take a walk, and then, with brush, broom, and dusting-cloth, set to work, for a sad-looking place it was. Sometimes, in the midst of her labors, she would have to stop short, and then she clasped her hands and laughed merrily at sight of the heaps of dirt and the heaps of books that lay side by side.

But the old man clasped his hands and laughed merrily, too, when he came back and saw the order in which the books had been arranged. To be sure, they were all put neatly back upon the shelves in the most regular order possible, but without the slightest regard to their contents; size and binding seemed to have been the only points of resemblance that Margelte had consulted; consequently a geography was placed close beside a prayer-book, or a volume of French plays leaned against a Bible. It took him no little time to get them all right again, but he did not mind that in the least, for now the fresh air had room to circulate through his chambers, and

the clear, bright sunlight could pass through the glass of his windows, without being buried in the dust on them.

Margelte had won the Doctor's heart completely ; he loved her as if she had been his own daughter ; and since he had no other way of showing his affection, he offered to lend her as many books as she wanted, — an offer that gave her much pleasure, though she had but little time for reading. It was a recompense that expressed the gratitude of the good old man, and showed she had made him really happy ; for though, in all she had done, she had never thought of a reward, she had earnestly hoped that she might be permitted to give a little happiness to the desolate, lonely old man. Margelte's simple heart, filled with an earnest wish to do as the dear God had commanded her, never left an opportunity unimproved of doing an act of kindness to those who had no one else to do it for them ; the words still rung in her ears that the venerable schoolmaster had said to her the day she left his care, when he laid his trembling hand upon her smooth, shining hair and said, " My daughter, never forget

that you are the follower of Him who, while on earth, went about doing good, and who commanded those who would be his to follow Him; remember that He himself has said, 'Whatsoever ye shall do to one of the least of these, ye do it unto Me!'" — and faithfully she strove to follow his counsel; nor did she ever find the promise to fail, "Ye shall in no wise lose your reward." This thought gave additional value to the old man's offer to lend her his books; and on Sunday afternoons, when she took turns with the housemaid in having a holiday, on the days when her turn came she would go, after church, into the garden, and seating herself in the shade, enjoy the perfect repose of quiet happiness within and without.

The housemaid whom she had offended that day on her way to the market, by the manner in which she had spoken of the market-money, had been, from that time, her worst enemy; nevertheless, Margele's remark had somewhat disturbed her conscience, so that she had never since felt exactly easy. She now began, little by little, to come round and try to make up with Margele, who, not

having the least ill-feeling towards her, received her very kindly. Other girls of the neighborhood, too, finding how pleasantly Margelte spent her Sundays, came in, now and then, to share them, if she would allow; and though sorry for the interruption, she felt better pleased to have them there than to know they were somewhere in the public gardens: so sometimes she would read aloud to them; sometimes walk up and down in the pleasant air and repeat to them what she had before read; or sometimes get them all seated in some quiet spot, while they sang pretty hymns, or read, by turns, stories from the Bible. The next morning these girls found that they were always ready to begin the week's work in better health and spirits than when they went to the dance and lost their time and money without getting any return. God has promised, "Them that honor me, I will honor."





## CHAPTER IV.



HE Doctor took a very deep interest in the kind-hearted girl; she seemed to have so much more refinement of idea and manners than was usual with girls of her position in life, that he found it difficult to believe her really the child of plain peasant-people. She chattered to him as she would have done to her father; told him all she knew of her childhood; all about the farm, for which she even yet felt a little homesick; of the pleasant times when she took care of the sheep; and even of the "queen-dream," and how she had been joked and teased about it. "And what is most foolish of all, Herr Doctor," she would say, "is, that to this very day I can't get it out of my head, and I don't believe I ever shall. Sometimes I determine to think of something else to get it out of my head; but, try as hard

as I will, there it is, and mixes itself up with everything else, and I can't help it!"

"Indeed! Is that really so?" asked the Doctor, with great interest; for, from having passed his life more among books and the kind of world described in them, than among real living men and things, he had great faith in the wonderful; and then he would add, thoughtfully,—"Yes, yes! there must be something in it. There is something in *you*, Margelte, that is not common, even if you are not a princess by right. All this ought to be cleared up. Who were your parents, really?"

Margelte told him what she had learned about them from granny; and that was all she knew. All she said, though, seemed but to impress the wonder-loving old gentleman more and more that there was some mystery about the matter. He seemed quite sure that, as he had often read of in some foolish novels, she must be some great man's daughter, lost or stolen in her infancy, and entitled to a vast fortune and high rank, if she could but prove her rights; so he asked her, one day, whether, among the things that her

mother had left, there was not something that would throw light upon the matter.

“No,” said Margelte, “nothing but what any poor peasant-woman might be supposed to leave behind her ; but then she sold a great many things to relieve her poverty, — all her best clothes, among other things ; and I wore her old gowns for a long, long time, as long as they would hang together. But, oh yes !” she exclaimed, suddenly recollecting herself, — “there was one nice thing in her chest, and I’ve got it now ! It was a beautiful pocket-handkerchief, all elegantly embroidered, and a beautiful crown worked in the middle of it ; and then I’ve a beautiful neck-band, too, with a golden ducat sewed to it. I used to wear it when I was a little child, because my mother said it was good for the eyes. She told me my godfather had given it to me, but who he was, I never knew.”

“Have you it with you here ?” asked the Doctor, eagerly, for he was becoming more and more interested, and began to feel very sure that it was going to turn out as things did in the story-books.

“Yes, sir,” replied Margelte ; “but they

both are down in the bottom of my chest; the first time I can get I will look for them and show them to you, but just now I must go, for I have stayed so long talking here that I must be off."

"Just one moment more, my child!" cried out the old man, as she went off; but Margelte had duties waiting for her, and away she went.

The worthy Doctor could not drive all this out of his head: he thought of all the stories he had ever read or heard of, of children that had been wronged, lost, or disinherited; he thought of Caspar Hauser and everybody like him that he could bring to his mind; and the more he considered the pleasant manners, the refined air and taste, her natural delicacy of feeling, or her natural abhorrence of everything rude, common, or vulgar, the more convinced he felt that she could not be the child of a poor spinning-woman. The Doctor was a true and earnest Christian, but he had been, all his life long, so shut up among his books and devoted to his studies, that he had been very little among his fellow-creatures,—not enough to have observed them

as closely as he ought. He knew that the love of God purifies the heart and drives out all that is sinful ; but he did not know that the light of religion in the soul glows through the face, and gives it an expression of gentle sweetness and refinement, while the daily practice of its precepts produces a refinement and polish of manners such as no court can give. He did not know that the simplest, plainest peasant-woman, who, loving God and trying day by day to obey him, did as his word commanded, if placed beside the greatest lady in the land, whose politeness was only acquired in society, would be found to be, really, the more polished of the two.

Margelte's personal appearance was not very aristocratic ; she was stout, strong, and rosy, and had none of that slenderness of form and delicacy of feature and complexion that one would expect to see in a young princess ; but that, thought the good old man, is because she has had to work so hard all her life ; she certainly has a pair of eyes as bright as the light ! So she had, for they danced with pleasure at the sight of others'

happiness, or the opportunity of contributing to it. She abhorred all things vulgar because she had learned to love the things of God, which are refined and pure; her manners were uncommonly lady-like, because she was accustomed to practise the precepts of the Holy Bible, which bade her to show respect to the aged and to all her betters, to do to others as she would like them to do to her; not to think of herself, but to think of the comforts and happiness of others, and "as far as lieth in her, to do good to all men."

Little as the Doctor generally troubled himself about the affairs of other people, he now set to work to study closely all the gazettes, and to search through all the books of heraldry, to trace out the families of all the noble and princely houses of Germany, in hopes of getting some little light thrown upon the subject. Margelte, too, much as she laughed about it, and hard as she tried to get it out of her mind, could not help thinking, day and night, of the Doctor's conjectures, and had hardly patience enough to wait for Sunday that she might have an hour's quiet talk with him.

But even for that she never deserted her church; though in the depths of her heart she grieved that she could not prevent her thoughts from wandering away from what she was doing. It was not until the next Sunday afternoon that she had the opportunity of showing him the handkerchief and neck-band, and the old gentleman put on his best spectacles to examine them.

The handkerchief was somewhat yellow from long lying, but it was of the finest linen cambric, and in the centre, worked with a needle, the coronet of a Count, below which were the initials, "M. v. H." "There, now!" cried the delighted old man. "How came such a thing as that into the possession of a poor spinning-woman, I should like to know!"

"But she was at service, you know," said Margelte, timidly, "and might have received it as a present from her mistress."

"Pap-er-la-pap!" exclaimed the Doctor, with scornful incredulity. "Do people present such things as that to their servant-maids, unless they want to see them taken up for stealing? And *steal* it—that *your* mother never did in this world!"

“No, sir! *Indeed* she never did!” exclaimed Margelte, quickly and eagerly.

“Now let us look at No. 2,” said the Doctor, and he held up the velvet neck-band, trimmed with beads of amber, and from the middle was suspended a yellow, golden duc-at, evidently a christening gift. Upon one side of this medal was represented a castle; upon the other, richly engraven, a coat-of-arms, with a few words that Margelte had never been able to make out. The Doctor, however, by dint of hard study, aided by his spectacles, at last discovered all about it, and starting up, with a cry of joy, exclaimed, “Yes, yes! That’s it! Marguerite, Countess von Hohenstein, 1815. Yes, this is the coat-of-arms of the family von Hohenstein, — one of the oldest and proudest in the Empire; and these, too, are the initials under the coronet on the handkerchief, ‘M. v. H.’ The band was, of course, as with every other child, put round your neck when you were baptized, as a sort of label in case you should ever be lost. This, now, shows the propriety of this German custom of ours! Yes, yes, it’s as plain as day now. You are the child

of the Countess von Hohenstein! Marguerite, that is, Margrethe, — and so those country folks got it down to Margelte!”

“But why should they” — Margelte stopped short, for everything seemed to swim around her.

“Send you away, or give you away, you mean, don’t you?” asked the Doctor, finishing the question for her. “Oh, there may have been a hundred reasons for that: disputes about the property, rival claims; domestic quarrels. Oh, a hundred reasons! Then, too, your birth seems to have occurred the year of the war, when everything was unsettled and upside-down, and so it may have been in your family. Oh, it’s all just as plain as can be!”

But to Margelte it was not so very plain, and she was obliged to sit down with her head upon her hands, for she could hardly tell whether all this were a dream or a reality. The good man, though, was as sure as his heart could desire, and very full of zeal. “But we mustn’t hurry matters too much,” said he, gathering up all his books of genealogy and heraldry. “I must first make my-

self thoroughly familiar with all these; I must first get by heart, as it were, all the branches of the family for some time back, so as to strike exactly the right point: now I have all I want in the way of facts, so you, dear child, just go to your own little room, and pray earnestly to the dear God to direct me in my way, and it will all come right, I promise."

Margelte did go to her little room, and prayed with all her heart for support and guidance in this great event of her life. Then she went down to her duties; but her head was so full of what she had heard, that that day, for the first time in her life, she was blamed for carelessness. She bore it meekly, however; she knew that when she explained it she should be heartily forgiven; but what would the Frau Oberstin, the Colonel's lady, say, when she found that her bed had been made, her room brushed, her shoes cleaned, and her windows washed by a countess!

The Doctor, that Monday, went in and out oftener than he had ever been known to do before. To Margelte he seemed to have nothing to say, except that, as he passed her

he would remark, "All is going on very well; the prospect is very fair." But on Friday morning, just as his fire began to burn briskly, he begged her, before she went to take out his best coat, — and a coat of most extraordinary make and appearance it was, — "to brush and shake it well and bring it to him, together with a ruffled shirt that she would find somewhere in the chest; he thought it must be near the bottom, for it was a very long time indeed since he had worn it." Margelte stood, quite astonished at such orders, and looked at him to see if he were in earnest; but he replied by a nod, a kind smile, and a merry wink with one eye, saying, "It's all on your account, child, all."

A stick, with a silver knob, was next brought from some hidden-away corner of his wardrobe, and in this holiday array he descended the stairs, and walked with a resolute step down the street, altogether unconscious of the gaze of the people he passed, or the laughter and jokes of the boys who followed him.

To Margelte, this dressing-up was the more mysterious from the looks he had given

her from time to time while it was going on and to such a height was her curiosity raised that, though his room was but half put in order, she could neither return to it nor settle her mind to anything else until he came back. And back he did come, very soon, with a face blazing from his rapid walk, and an air ten times more knowing, if possible, than before.

"It is almost entirely settled," said he to the startled girl. "Be sure you come to my room this very evening, for I have something of vast importance to tell you."

Oh, how long that day was, and how diligently Margelte did work that she might be able, the moment supper was over, to go to the old man's room! When she did at last start for it, she was forced to put down for a moment or two the lamp she held in her hand, lest she should let it fall; and then she had to sit down herself, so much did she tremble. When she got into the room, she had to drop into a chair.

"Now, my child," said the old man, "listen and you shall hear all. I have found that, about the date of your birth, there lived a

Countess Marguerite von Hohenstein, who, born in this country, passed afterwards into foreign lands; she had several children, who all died. All the circumstances agree with my opinion, and what is most extraordinary, this same Countess is now living in this very city. Having learned all this, I started directly off, caused myself to be announced to the Countess, laid before her all the evidences, and told her plainly that they were the property of a poor girl, now in the city, living at service."

"Well, and what did she say?" asked Margelte, eagerly.

"She was astonished, — seemed moved, — but not at all as much as I expected; but great people are practised, you know, in concealing their feelings; and after thinking for a moment, said, 'May I ask you, my dear sir, to bring this girl to see me as soon as may be?' I promised, of course, with great pleasure, and paid her my respects quite naturally; but never in my life could I have believed that I could have spoken up so to quality, and felt so much at my ease with a real countess. But, yes, yes! I know how

that came about; it was just from having been friends so long with a *young* countess," — and he laughed heartily at his own conceit.

"And do you really believe anything will come of it?" asked Margelte, who, to tell the truth, had expected more decided results.

"Believe? Why there is no doubt! Else why would she want to see you? I promised to take you there early to-morrow morning: so dress yourself in your best."

"Oh, how fortunate!" exclaimed Margelte. "To-morrow my master and mistress are going on a land-party, and are to take all the children with them, — so they have promised all the maids a holiday for the whole day!"

"Ay, ay, my child," said the old Doctor, reverently. "Don't you see how all things work together for good to those who love the dear Lord? Study out your whole life, Margelte, and see if this is not so. And now, good night! I shall not often tell you so after this;" and the poor gentleman seemed quite sad.

When Margelte went to bed that night, she was, for a long time, so tired that she

could not sleep ; and yet, when she thought of the truth of her dream (for in her eyes a queen and a countess were pretty much the same thing) and how it was coming out, she felt more fear than joy. Would she not be more likely to mortify and disgust than to please her lady-mother ? But then again she thought how she should enjoy the surprise of the Colonel and his lady, and above all, of her fellow-servants ; she thought, too, of the astonishment of the folks at the farm : the wife, — she who had felt too grand to receive the poor orphan as her daughter-in-law, — would n't she look amazed when the coroneted coach drove up, and the lady-mamma, with her newly found daughter, alighted ! And what would George say ? Only that very day she had heard that he had not yet brought home a wife to the house. What a true heart he had, and oh, how delightful it would be to tell the whole world that the unknown peasant-son was the chosen bridegroom of the young Countess ! But then, again, would her noble mother consent to such a bridegroom ? Her brain was so full of all kinds of things that at last they all

mingled together, and she fell asleep. When she awoke the next morning, her first thought was what an important day that was to be to her, and she kneeled down and prayed her Heavenly Father to be with her through all that might come, good or bad.





## CHAPTER V.



THE land-party set out, and Margelte proceeded to dress herself, — no small business, this time at least. She had already washed herself so clean that one would have supposed she meant it to last for a year; she had brushed and braided her hair until not one stray hair could be discovered, and the smooth bands that were passed behind her ears looked like folds of satin. But just as she came to the last ornament, it struck her, for the first time, that she ought to keep close to her country-dress; it was very silly in her to attempt to dress like a town-lady, — that might seem like a mean imitation, the other was neat and simple; and so she did.

She could not have looked prettier than she did when she walked into the old man's room, in the clean, dark Sunday gown, with

the little cap and its band upon her glossy hair, the long rich braids of which hung down her back ; the neck-band fastened round her throat, and her fresh, rosy, innocent face lighted up with those great, clear, brown eyes. Even the old Doctor, fastidious as his anxiety had made him, looked at her with perfect satisfaction, and felt in his heart that even a countess might feel proud of her.

They set out, Margelte's heart constantly breathing the unuttered prayer, "Dear Lord, do Thou lead and guide me!" and at last reached the fine hotel in which the Countess lived. Margelte's heart beat fast as she stood in the ante-room waiting for admission ; but at last the door opened, and they were told to enter, for the lady was within.

"Here, Your Highness, is the girl of whom I spoke," said the stately Doctor, leading in the trembling Margelte. "I have the honor to present her, with my most humble respects," — and he hurried off as fast as he could, though the Countess called to him to stay ; he thought an interview of this kind should take place without witnesses.

The Countess, a stately dame some fifty

years old, robed in a dress of rich blue satin sat in an easy-chair, and greeted the girl with a kind welcome. Margelte trembled from excitement in every limb, and the good Countess, pitying her agitation, said gently, "Sit down, my child; sit down, and tell me if these things are really yours."

"Really and truly, Lady," replied Margelte, solemnly.

"And they were given you by your mother? What was her name?" asked the lady.

"Christine Hillerin von Vellburg," replied Margelte.

"Did you ever know her? Where did she die?" asked the lady.

"I can hardly remember much about her now," said Margelte. "She had lived at service somewhere far off, and soon after her return she became blind, and lost her health entirely. She used to spin for the peasant and his wife, at the Tannenhof (the Pine-tree farm), and after her death they took me."

"Did she never tell you anything of her master and mistress?"

"No, not to me. Granny, at the Tannenhof, said that she had once said her master

and mistress had not treated her well; but that was all."

"No wonder she thought so!" said the Countess, her eyes filling with tears. "Dear child, I was that mistress; you are the child of most worthy parents, and the blessing of their faithfulness shall rest on you."

Margelte looked at the lady with a feeling of great relief, though matters had turned out so differently from what she had expected.

"Now, listen to me," said the lady, "and I will tell you all about it; but it is a long story.

"My husband was in the army, and absent a good deal. I was living here when your mother came into my service, and her faithfulness and devotion soon attached me to her strongly. The death of a brother made my husband heir to some property in Bavaria, and he got leave of absence and went to visit it. He took, as his attendant, a worthy soldier, named Hillerin, a man who had long served him faithfully, and I took your mother to wait on me. Hillerin proved as useful on the estate as he had been in the camp or

field ; an affection sprung up between him and your mother ; but their projected marriage was long delayed from their unwillingness to leave us. But they were both getting towards middle-age, and at our persuasions the wedding at last took place. They went to live in a neat little house that my husband had built for them,—cultivated a bit of ground of their own, and gave great assistance in the care of the estate.

“ One year after that, I held you at the baptismal font, and hung round your neck the amber neck-band that you have brought back to me. About this time my husband was persuaded to take part in the Russian war, from which no one, from the beginning, boded any good ; but he was fond of military glory, and Hillerin determined to go with him : your worthy father had no other object than to be near and watch over his master and friend.

“ I gave the estate in charge to a competent person and went to Munich, taking with me your mother and yourself ; your excellent mother never seemed to me like a servant, and we shared together our hopes and fears.

“ They had left us in June : in December my husband returned almost naked, sick, discouraged, and alone. Through all the perils of that fearful war, your father had stood with unshaken fidelity beside him : one night they were obliged to stay in a miserable cabin ; their fire went out ; my husband, benumbed with cold and hunger, was indistinctly aware, like some one in a dream, of having a skin wrapped around him : it was your father, who had, for his sake, taken the last covering from his own body. In the morning the Count awoke, refreshed, from a comfortable sleep, but your father was in that deeper sleep that has no awakening ; he was frozen stiff ; he had given up his very life for his master !

“ Faithfully we then promised his sorrowing wife never to desert her or her child, but to repay to them, as far as God should give us the ability, the generous fidelity of the husband and father.

“ One trouble seldom comes alone. We were on the point of setting out for Italy, whither my husband was going for the recovery of his broken health, when my two

little daughters were taken ill with small-pox. I immediately gave permission to such of our servants as were afraid of the disease to leave the house, and all availed themselves of it but your mother, who insisted on remaining. My time was so entirely taken up in the care of my husband that I was obliged to leave the children entirely to her; and she never left them, though still overwhelmed with grief for the death of your father. You, who were then a delicate child, were confided to the care of a worthy woman, and thus preserved from the infection.

“My little Emily died in her arms; the handkerchief with which she had wiped the death-sweat from her face, she kept as a remembrancer of her. Clara, my youngest, thanks to her care and God’s blessing upon it, recovered, and then preparations were made as rapidly as possible for the journey to Italy. The very evening before we were to start, your mother sickened; we were to leave at daybreak the next day, and the necessary passports and so on, rendered necessary by the unsettled state of the country, having all been made out and forwarded, the

state of affairs altogether made it impossible to delay. Our housekeeper, the only one of our attendants who was to remain behind, was a woman in whom I had always had the most unbounded confidence, and to her care I gave my poor Christine, — with the strictest injunctions to give her the same care and attention that she would have given me, and with the same disregard of expense; above all, if she grew, at any time, dangerously ill, we were to be immediately informed of it; and if, on the other hand, she recovered, we were to be notified as soon as she was in a condition to come to us.

“For a long time I heard nothing from her, and my husband was so ill that I scarcely dared leave his bedside, so I could not make any very extensive inquiries. The first leisure I had I wrote to the housekeeper, and received in reply the information that your mother had died of the small-pox, and her child had soon followed her, from pure weakness and debility.

“My blind confidence in this woman had prevented me from knowing that covetousness and envy had made her, long before,

your dear mother's most deadly enemy ; for she looked upon Christine as one who had usurped the position she herself was entitled to hold in our family. Ignorant of this, however, I received her statement without a doubt ; and every tie that bound me to Dresden being thus dissolved,—for I had lived in too close seclusion to have made many friendships,—I did not care to return, and so never had an opportunity of learning the truth of the case.

“For four years we went from one place to another, through Italy and Switzerland, for my husband's health was then entirely restored. Our hotel in Dresden was, of course, shut up, and the housekeeper dismissed ; but before removing the furniture, I resolved to pay it one more visit, to see the grave of my Christine, and learn something more of her last days. With great distress I there heard that the housekeeper, fearing herself the infection, had had her sent to the hospital, and by the assistance of the physician who attended her had made her believe that it was by my husband's orders. That was trouble and grief enough, but I did not

think I had any more to hear. Not finding her name on the death-list of the hospital, I concluded that it had been an oversight, but certainly believed her dead, for so I had been assured, and had heard or seen nothing to make me even *suspect* the contrary.

“Now, since the old gentleman, who has shown himself so deeply interested in you, has told me the tale he had heard from you, it is clear to my mind that, after her recovery in the hospital, she left it and the city, in poverty and weakness, sick at heart at our base ingratitude, and went to hide her griefs in her humble birthplace. We had so certainly looked upon her as belonging to us, so little thought of her ever leaving us, that we had not taken care, as we ought to have done, to secure her an independence: this was an unpardonable oversight! If she had but asked us for the least thing—even a spot whereon to stand her humble dwelling! But she always had a proud heart; and while she believed herself to have suffered at our hands such cruel injustice, she would have nothing to thank us for. Never shall I forgive myself that a friend,—for we never

looked upon her as a servant, — a friend so faithful, so devoted, should have died away from us ; and none but the dear Father knows how I have longed and prayed for some opportunity of repaying to some one dear to her the bitter wrongs I left her to bear.

“ And now my prayer has been answered. His hand has, in mercy, led you to me ; and to you, dear child, will I try to make up for it all. I am, besides, your godmother, and as my own only daughter is married, who can be so fit a person to take her place in my house and heart as the child of the woman who gave her own health and strength to save hers ? Come and stay with me, Marguerite ; come, and be to me as a daughter, and let me feel that I have still about me one to love and trust.”

Poor Margelte had forgotten all her dreams of greatness, and was weeping over the sad fate of her parents ; but at the same time she thanked most heartily the dear God that they had left behind them such remembrances, and felt almost ashamed and humbled that she should have desired, even for a moment,

to have been the child of any other mother. How delighted she was that the Countess knew nothing of all the foolish thoughts the good old Doctor had put into her head, and scarcely dared look at her, lest she should read her folly in her eyes.

The Countess now promised her that she would come, the next day, to see the Colonel and his lady, and beg them to release her ; “and then,” said she, “you shall remain, hereafter, with me, and may the Blessed One help me to take better care of you than I did of your poor mother !”

Deeply moved, yet with a heart vastly lighter than when she entered, Margelte returned home, thinking over all that had happened in the course of her young life, and admiring the strange and wonderful, and yet very simple ways by which the Father in Heaven had worked out the promise made to mothers who, like hers, had tried hard to serve and honor Him : “Leave thy fatherless children unto me, and I will keep them alive.” Not a single day had she ever passed, poor and parentless as she was, but she had had plenty to eat and drink and wear, a good fire

when she was cold, and a good bed when she was sleepy ; it had all seemed to come naturally, — but whose hand had provided all these things ?

So much had happened that morning that she thought it must have been very, very long, and was astonished, when she got home, to find the servants just serving the dinner. The dear, good old Doctor, meantime, was restlessly walking up and down his room, impatiently awaiting her return. He expected nothing less than that she would come with the old Countess in her coach, and already dressed as became her new rank ; he wondered whether he would recognize her. Oh, could it be that she would not come again at all ; that she would just send a civil message to Colonel Oberstein and his wife, and in her good fortune forget her old friends ?

He was still debating the matter in his mind when he heard her light, quick step upon the stairs, and the same identical Margelte, with her short woollen skirt, trimly dressed feet, and coquettish black cap, sprang in, held out her hand to him, and, between

laughing and crying, could not utter one single word.

"Well, now, what is it?" asked the Doctor, eagerly.

"There's no countess about it!" laughed Margelte.

"And the facts,—the coat-of-arms,—the name?" gasped the old man.

Margelte gave another merry laugh. "My mother was once a servant to the Countess, who gave her those things; the handkerchief for herself,—the chain to me when I was baptized."

"P-o-o-r child!" said the old man, with a face so long and a tone of such intense pity that out came another laugh. But he went on, "And I, old fool as I am, have been stuffing you with all those vain hopes, and doing all I could to make you discontented with the station you have filled so honorably. I have scattered all your pleasant dreams to the wind, and left you nothing but disappointment!"

"No, no, no!" said Margelte, taking his hand soothingly; "you have no idea what a service you have done me!"—and as the old

gentleman brightened up at that, she went on to tell him the whole story, just as she had heard it from the Countess. "And now, you see," she went on, "not a word of this should I ever have known but for you, Herr Doctor. And I can say before the Blessed Father, who knows my heart, that to have heard what I have this day of my parents gives me more happiness than to have found myself a lady. And that I have heard it, I must thank you. Besides, Herr Doctor, just figure to yourself now how I should look running about with a long trail to my dress, as young ladies do! Why, I'd a hundred times rather sweep the streets with my broom than with my clothes!"—and the picture seemed so very ridiculous that she laughed merrily.

The Doctor, delighted at seeing her so cheerful under what he called "her disappointments," joined heartily in the laugh, and for a moment they were like two merry children.



## CHAPTER VI.



HE Countess kept her promise, and the next day, after a long conversation with Col. Oberstein and his wife, carried Margelte off to her house, where, though she herself took the position of a servant, she was treated in every respect as a daughter. The Countess soon became strongly attached to her, and kept her constantly at her side ; she herself taught her to write as became a lady, and instructed her in all kinds of plain and fancy needlework, of which she had been before ignorant. The extreme retirement in which she lived gave her ample time to devote to her favorite, and well did she improve the advantages thus offered her. Always the same cheerful, industrious little person,—always ready and willing to help anybody,—everybody liked her, and seemed ready and willing to help her.

She was at liberty to visit the old Doctor as often as she liked ; and her visits made the old man very happy, — not only because he loved to have her with him, but because she always carried him books, or some other present equally to his taste, but which he was too poor to buy for himself. The Countess bought from him the whole edition of a little “Manual of Devotions,” a book which he had been obliged to publish at his own expense, and which, though full of beautiful prayers and hymns, had sold so slowly that it had almost ruined him, and he feared would soon quite do it. This unexpected bit of good-fortune enabled him to hire a little damsel of the neighborhood to do for him the little services that had all, hitherto, been performed by Margelte ; and so he was more reconciled to her absence. When he saw her so generally beloved, and so cheerfully happy in her new home, he fairly sunned himself in her bright eyes, and laughed gayly as he said to himself, “Yes, yes ! The great All-Father is wiser than any of us !” and in his *heart* he thanked Him.

When Margelte had become skilful in the

use of her pen, she wrote several times to the house-mother at the farm; but letter-writing was a thing seldom practised there, so she got no answers. She greatly longed, though, to hear once more from the old spot, or to see it.

The business that had so providentially brought the Countess, just then, to Dresden, was now completed, and she wished to return to the family-seat of which she had left her son-in-law in possession. It was a matter of course that Margelte, or, as she was now called, "Marguerite," should go with her; and the girl herself was delighted at the idea, for she longed to be again in the country. The preparations for the journey were nearly finished, when, one morning, Margaret heard her name called from the outside of the house, and saw standing at the gate a young peasant twirling his hat in his hand. "George!" exclaimed the girl, with a cry of delight,—"George! Is that you? How did you come here?"

George was so delighted at seeing her again, and at being so warmly greeted by her, that he at first forgot his errand. It was

a sad one. His mother had been for a week dangerously ill, and Liese was married; things would n't go right; there was nobody to take care of the sick woman and keep an eye to things about the house. "Then we thought of you," said George, "and both the father and mother were quite satisfied that you should come; and so they told me to greet you heartily from them, and to bid you to come at once, as is your duty, and not to desert them in their hour of need. As to the wages," he half whispered, half muttered, "you won't lose by it."

The Countess, who had heard of the arrival of Marguerite's visitor, now came out and spoke to him very graciously, — bidding her to take him into the sitting-room and treat him with all hospitality and attention. George looked around him at the splendid furniture of her present home, and saw her moving about among it all as though she had been used to it from her babyhood; he looked, too, at her fine, rich clothing, so different from the ragged old farm-dress, so soft and delicate in its material, so neat and becoming in its fit; he saw that, grand as was

the lady who owned this fine house, Marguerite was to her more as a child than a servant,—and, with a heavy heart, gave up all hope that she would listen to his request, and made up his mind to return home without delay.

But he knew very little of that kind heart; he knew very little of the high and holy principle by which the orphan-girl was guided,—that, if she felt she ought to obey the precept, “Do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you,” still more would she feel it to be a duty to do good to those who, in her hour of utmost need, had given her a home. She went herself to the Countess, and told her the business upon which her old friend had come, adding, “His parents took me when I was a poor orphan and must else have died of want and misery; it is only natural that I should do what I can for them, now that they are sick and in trouble; so, if you will permit it, my honored mistress, I would like to go back with George.”

“Go, dear child, by all means,” said the Countess, kindly, though it made her sad to

think of parting with her even for a little while. "Go. As you say, it is your duty to assist those who did so much for you; but do not stay longer than is absolutely necessary." Many arrangements, however, had to be settled between them before Marguerite *could* go; and the lady determined to postpone her own proposed journey until she could hear from her exactly how long her stay at the farm would be.

This settled, Marguerite hastily packed a few needed articles in a valise, took leave of the good old Doctor and her former mistress, and seated herself in the little cart beside George, who could not find words to express his admiration and gratitude.

Poor Marguerite — once more the "Margelte" of old times — could not help weeping for joy as she saw again the familiar objects of her childhood: the well-known fields, the unforgotten house, and the wide green before it, on which stood the lindens, — the two dear old lindens! But when she went in and met the house-mother who presided over all this; when she saw the once strong, active, and healthy woman now lying pale

and helpless upon her bed, she sobbed aloud with pity. Everybody was delighted to see "Margelte" again. "Now, Heaven be thanked that you are with us again!" sobbed the sick woman. "The blessing of the Orphan's God left us when you did, Margelte, for we drove you by our unkindness from our door; nothing has gone right since."

"Well, it'll all be right now," cried Stöffele, as he entered the room. "Now, old frau, lie still in your bed; things will go right now, and you can afford to be sick."

Margelte was delighted to find that, though she had indeed a great deal to do, health and strength were given her for the purpose; so she set about it right earnestly, and went on with cheerful and undaunted courage. As to homesickness for the city and her pleasant home with the Countess, she had no time to indulge in it. She rose early and went to bed late; toiled unceasingly about the house all day, and watched by the bedside of the sick woman nearly all night. The whole place, under her care, assumed a more tidy and cheerful aspect; and whether busy indoors or without, whenever a stir from the

invalid showed that she was awake, her careful nurse was in a moment at her side, with some little nourishing dainty, or some cooling drink, that amid all her toils she had found an opportunity to make; then, when she had given it, she shook up the heated pillow smoothed the tumbled bed, and left her again to her repose.

Everybody seemed the happier for her coming, down to the very house-maids; for many a time, when they were toiling under more than their usual tasks, Margelte came to their aid, and did no small part of the work herself; and besides, now that she had the management, they had more, and very much nicer food at their meals. "What a way she has!" the stout peasant Stöffele often said to himself, when he had been watching how quietly she glided from spot to spot, and accomplished all this. "I never could have believed that she would have turned out such a neat, handy little thing!"

George was greatly distressed that she had too much to do; he watched her constantly, and whenever he found himself alone with her, would ask anxiously, "Art not tired,

Margelte? Pray thee go sleep a bit, and rest. Surely thou 'lt be sick, — surely.”

But Margelte, with a merry laugh, assured him that she never felt better in her life. “Indeed,” said she, “I think it is much better for me that I have been obliged to go to work again; I fear the lazy life I was leading in the city would have made me sick in the end.”

The poor sick woman revived beyond all expectation under the gentle and constant care of her young nurse, — the only being in the world from whom she would have received it; but her disease was an incurable one, and all Margelte’s devotion could not prolong her life.





## CHAPTER VII.



HE house-mother was dead, and grief spread a solemn silence over the whole family ; daily duties that could not be omitted were performed more quickly and quietly than usual, and everybody moved and spoke softly.

On Sunday they laid her to her rest, and said an earnest prayer over her simple grave, that the Blessed Father in Heaven would let them all meet once more in that more beautiful and better world ; and then they went to their home. Even on Monday none of them felt like work, and the peasant Stöffele, with his children and Margelte, sat together, in the afternoon, in the little garden, and talked of the departed,—of her industry and carefulness in her days of health, of her patience and sufferings in her days of sickness, and of their trust that she was now in the enjoyment of rest.

Suddenly one of the house-maids rushed, breathless, to where they were sitting, exclaiming, "A coach! A most elegant coach! And just here at the door!"

They all left the garden and moved towards the gate, where they saw, sure enough, an elegant coach drawn by two fine, sleek-looking horses, striving to make its way over the rough roads and drive up to the door of the farm-house. Presently the lady that was within ordered the liveried coachman to stop, saying that she would alight and walk up: it was the Countess. In the great confusion into which the death of the house-mother had thrown everything, Margelte had allowed the last week to pass without writing to her; and she, anxious to leave the city, and thinking it impossible to go without her favorite, had determined to go herself to the farm and learn if anything had befallen her, or, if possible, to take her back with her.

When she learned the death of the good woman, she spoke very kindly and feelingly to the peasant and his family, trying to show them how mercifully their dear God had dealt in sparing her to them so long, and in

taking her now from her sufferings. At the same time she expressed the hope that, now all was over, Marguerite might be no longer needed, and might go with her home again.

The peasant, after many efforts, at last found courage to address the lady. "You see, Your Excellency," said he, with a great deal of embarrassment, "this lad — my son George here — has been deep in love with the girl this long time, — long before you knew her, Your Excellency, — and — I must say it — his mother and I, — both so stupid as not to see how we were standing in our own light, — we both felt a bit puffed up with the blessing the dear God had poured out on us, and thought our boy too good for a poor, destitute orphan that had nothing but a kind heart and a pair of nimble, skilful hands for her bridal portion, — so we wouldn't let it be so. But here, upon her death-bed, George told his mother how much he wanted her for a wife; and she had got to know her better, you see; and so, though she was too far gone to speak it, she gave a silent blessing on it. And if I must say it, well she might: she'd have been a most heartless,

ungrateful woman to have held out against it, after all that Margelte here had done for her and hers. Yes, Your Excellency; she learned to know before she went that the very blessing that made us so proud, was just all along of what we did for Margelte when her own poor mother died. Anyhow, the mother's consent made us both very happy like,—my son George and me; it just seemed to me the thing that ought to be; and if so be they do be married, I would just give up the farm to them, you see, Your Excellency, and just set down myself to rest: for I need it. I've worked hard in my day."

"Is Marguerite willing, then, to marry your son?" asked the Countess.

"You see, your Excellency, we have n't had the courage to ask her just yet," replied the peasant.

"Oh, well then," said the lady, with a smile, "I shall have to do it for you, I see. Tell me freely, my dear child, whether you will stay here or return with me. You know that I love you as tenderly as though I were really your own mother, and I promise you, if you do stay with me, not only to take care

of you while I live, but to make an ample provision for you in case anything should happen to me."

George said not a word, for he remembered all the splendor of the Countess's home; he looked sadly at Marguerite, but said nothing, and she did not keep him long in suspense.

"Dear Lady," said she, with moistened eyes, "the dear God will surely bless you for all the kindness you have shown me. I love you as dearly as I could love the best mother; but do not take it amiss if I stay with George. I have loved him as long and as well as he has loved me; and besides, I must not forget that his home is a more fitting home for me than yours is."

"I believe you have chosen aright, my dear, noble-hearted child, and not for one moment would I set my feelings in comparison with your happiness and interests. But be assured I shall not forget to care properly for my adopted daughter; you shall not go empty-handed into your husband's house."

George's brothers and sisters, who had heard all that passed, were not slow in spreading it abroad, and there was rejoicing

over the whole farm. George himself was so extravagantly happy that he was on the point of expressing it in his usual boisterous way,—by leaping up and shouting “hurrah!” when he recollected, just in time to save his good name, that he was in deep mourning, and that there was sorrow as well as gladness in the house; besides, upon reflection, he concluded that turning somersets was not altogether a becoming occupation for a man who was about to be married and become a house-father.





## CHAPTER VIII.



ANY years had passed since the little maiden of our first acquaintance drove her flock of sheep into the farm-yard; the peasant's house stood there still, and every chair and stool occupied the same place within it that they did then, in the days of poor old granny. Margelte, too, was there, but no longer as the orphan dependent upon charity for a home; she was now the mistress of the farm,—the house-mother. Gretchen has grown to be a great girl, and hangs with affection about her sister-in-law; one of George's brothers is in America; the other still works upon the farm, and will pass the rest of his life there.

The old peasant—"Father Stöffele, of the Tannenhof," as he is called among the neighbors—is still well and tolerably strong for a man of his age. Indeed, he says that he

ought to live twice as long as other people, to enjoy seeing the industry and good management of his daughter-in-law, and the honor in which she is everywhere held. He still works a little with the others, but not much; but his great enjoyment is to go, in the warm, sunny afternoon, to walk over the broad fields, and see what rich blessings the dear Father in Heaven sends even in the times men call the worst, upon those who strive to serve and obey him. None could persuade Stöffele that he would thus have prospered in his fields and his home, had he turned the poor spinning-woman's orphan from his door, and left her to be cared for by strangers. None will ever make him doubt the truth of God's promise: "He who giveth to one of these little ones a cup of cold water, shall by no means lose his reward." He thinks that he has been repaid richly, principal and interest, for every kreutzer little Margelte ever cost him. And so he has, in more ways than one.

The rich wedding-gift of the Countess, added to the care and industry of the master, has made the farm indeed a noble one; and

much has the young house-mother done for that master. Guided by her gentle precepts and example, he rules in joy and friendship all who surround him in the house and the fields, and above all, in Godly fear, he seeks to do, not only what seems best for the worldly interests of his family, but what is right in the sight of God and will bring down His blessing upon his toil. And amid all the prosperity that is thus bestowed upon her,—amid all the abundance with which she is surrounded,—Margelte has never forgotten that once she lived in this very house, a poor, destitute orphan, thrown by God's providence upon the charity of those whose place she now fills.

The orphan never goes unrelieved from her door; and when the harvest is gathered in, bountifully is the table spread at the Tannenhof, not only for the reapers who have gathered it, but for the poor gleaners, too, live they far or near; nor is that all, for what is left from that meal never comes again upon her table: they glean the leavings there too, and carry them home in their baskets; and not for all the joys and blessings that have

been showered upon her, does grateful Margelte ever give such earnest, heartfelt thanks to her Father on High, as for what she has the power to bestow upon the poor and friendless.

That she once lived at service in the city with great people, — least of all that she was (yes, and still is) the dear, adopted child of a countess, — none would ever find out from her style of dress, any more than they would from her behavior or manners ; though some might fancy that they could see its influence in the neatness and cleanliness with which she dresses her children and keeps her house, or in the winning softness of her voice and manners.

When Margelte had been married nearly ten years, and had become sole mistress of the farm, with her husband's consent she had nicely cleaned and neatly fitted up like a town-lodging the large upper room in which poor granny had died ; and then George went himself to seek for and bring the poor old Doctor to take possession of it, that he might end his days with them, free from care.

But, alas ! He was too late. The Doctor was dead ; they had found him one morning lifeless in his bed. But he had not forgotten Margelte, and in his will had left her a fine and well-selected portion of his books. To her herself it was almost a valueless gift, for she had little leisure and still less inclination for reading ; but for her children it proved, in after years, a valuable inheritance.

Though the old man never occupied the room so nicely prepared, Margelte soon after had the delight of receiving a visit from the Countess, accompanied by two of her young grand-daughters, who all came to pass a week with her ; indeed they would have stayed longer, but the little ladies ate so much bread and fresh butter, and drank so much rich, sweet cream, that they both became ill. Before the Countess left, however, she made arrangements for erecting a neat gravestone to the memory of "Poor Christine, the Spinning-Woman," as she was called throughout the neighborhood,—but to her, the faithful servant and valued friend.

It is again a beautiful Sunday evening,

and the family — as at the beginning of our story — are enjoying their pleasant evening rest upon the lawn; George and Margelte upon the stoop, the old grandfather in his great leathern chair that has been placed in the sun; and two rosy-cheeked boys and a strong, healthy girl are wandering about as George and his brother and sister had done then. But instead of the orphan Margelte, there sat her eldest son, reading from the Bible the story of Joseph and his Brethren. So clear were his tones and so earnest his manner, that the old grandfather declared he must be a clergyman. In Joseph's dream Margelte saw the counterpart of her own, and nodding and laughing to her husband, said, "Did n't my dream come out too? I was to be a queen, you know."

George looked round at his bright, healthy children, and abroad upon his broad, rich fields; he thought, too, of the peace in his home, and then looked at his faithful wife; and when he had done all this, he felt very much like making some kind of a speech, but all his life-long he had never been a speech-maker; yet his heart was so full that

he must say something ; so he took the Bible from the boy's hand, and only observed, "Give it to me, and I will read something too."

It did not take him long to find what he sought, for he was well read in the Holy Book, and soon he began to read,—“Who can find a virtuous woman ? for her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life. Her children rise up and call her blessed, her husband also and he praiseth her. Many daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all. Favor is deceitful and beauty is vain, but a woman that feareth the Lord, she shall be praised.”

The tears rose to Margelte's eyes, and she bent her head forward like a queen upon whose brow they were about to place a crown : but it was already there ; the love of her husband and household was the crown of her rejoicing.





# Leon and Zephie;

OR THE

LITTLE WANDERERS.

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN OF

MADAME OTTALIE WILDERMUTH

BY

ANNA B. COOKE.



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## LEON AND ZEPHIE.

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### CHAPTER I.



IT is about sixteen years ago that, in the autumn, before the door of an inn in one of the back streets of the beautiful town of Nuremberg, there stood a singular-looking wagon of a sort seldom seen in that part of the country: it was a long, covered vehicle, on each side of which were several small windows, and it was drawn by an old miserable-looking bay horse. Indeed it would have been hard to decide which was more meagre and miserable in appearance, — the old horse, or the weather-tanned, exhausted man that sat there to drive him. And in perfect keeping with both was a tall, sharp-featured gentleman, in a somewhat elegant dress, who was walking about

the establishment. The chamber-maid, from the window, had been inspecting the whole party as they stopped before the inn, and now called to the waiter to come and look.

"What is it, Madlin?" asked the waiter.

"Oh! strolling players!" replied the girl, as she heard her master's step; and she shut the window violently, as if in great scorn.

"I don't know whether I can take them in," said the landlord. "It is n't long since a company of the same sort came and quartered themselves here, and then went off without paying their reckoning."

But the vehicle stopped, though not an attendant of the house was to be seen far or near. To be sure, the chamber-maid was peeping about, half wild with curiosity to see what was under the cover,—whether the wagon was filled with wax-figures, or wild beasts, or a panorama, or a giant, or a fat lady.

It proved, however, to be none of them. Two little children crept from under the cover, wrapped in blankets and little mantles that seemed to fit neither of them. The girl, who was the elder, threw off her old

brown hood, and leaped lightly over the driver's seat, which she partly overturned in the process. The boy was rather longer in showing himself, and then seated himself quietly on the narrow seat of the old stoop of the inn, while his nimble companion eagerly examined the narrow street, the old, high-gabled house, and all the various and tasteful devices with which it was decorated in order to make it attractive to customers.

"Can we not stay here to-night?" asked the thin-faced gentleman, in a tone which, despite his present circumstances, told unmistakably of high breeding.

"I am very sorry," said the landlord; "but every place is full: I have not another spot, not even a garret;" — and his servants, of course, did not contradict him.

The travellers seemed greatly disappointed by this intelligence, and the brown, meagre driver went off grumbling, to hitch on his horses again, when the children came up.

"No room in such a great, big house?" exclaimed the girl, in innocent astonishment.

"Not a spot, little Missie," said the landlord, rather more kindly.

"Oh, but that cannot be, sir,"-persisted the girl. "Why, just look how thin papa is, and he is the only one that wants a room in the house; we sleep in the wagon, and François lies down beside the horse; but if you should sew us all up together, papa and François and Cherubino and me, you could not make out of us all one such a good thick papa as you are."

The curious by-standers, who had gradually gathered around, laughed outright, and the thick landlord laughed too; and promised to go and see if he could find a place. So François led his nag back again to the stable, and threw himself down beside it with such right good-will, that a couple of teasing stable-boys begged to know if he had been racing his steed and won: offering, in that case, to buy him for twenty louis-d'or;—another of the hostlers advised him to go and hire the animal to a hatter, for *he* could hang his hats for show upon the creature's hip-bones. But François shook his head, and told them very decidedly that "the pony was not for sale, but he was a nice, very nice animal."

The Herr Lionet — for so was the owner of this brilliant establishment named — betook himself with the children to the parlor of the inn, where a table was soon set out with some thin soup: this was given to the little ones. François, in the kitchen, refreshed himself with a glass of beer; the papa called for a pint of wine, and then proceeded to write out a handbill, which François was to carry immediately to the printer. In a very short time it was ready, and read as follows: —

“The well-known and distinguished Herr Lionet has just arrived with his family in this place, and hopes to receive from its inhabitants the same kind patronage that has been so liberally vouchsafed him in all the most celebrated cities and towns of Germany. He will give his first exhibition to-morrow evening in the parlor of the ‘Blue Eagle’ Inn.

“Herr Lionet himself will first astonish the public by his remarkable skill with the cards, and some wonderful exhibitions of Natural Magic.

“ Mademoiselle Zephirine Lionet — generally known as ‘ The Fourth Grace ’ — will perform a celebrated dance à la Psyche, and win all hearts by her graceful elegance.

“ The distinguished comic performer, Monsieur François Desbordes, will, by his rare and characteristic drollery and wit, put to flight all sadness and gravity.

“ Mademoiselle Zephirine, the Youthful Grace, assisted by Master Cherubino Lionet, — so favorably known to the public as ‘ The Wonder-Child,’ — will perform a popular Biscayan dance with tambourine accompaniment, and attract great and general applause.

“ The whole will be varied by a great variety of amusing performances and original drolleries arising from the brilliant wit and humor of the great comedian, Monsieur François Desbordes.”

While Herr Lionet prepared this brilliant inventory of delights, Zephirine, “ the Youthful and Fourth Grace,” had been making acquaintance with the house and those in it ; as a consequence, she came back, trium-

phantly, with two hot potatoes that had been given her in the kitchen, but which she came to share with Cherubino. While the famished child eagerly devoured his, the sister whispered to him, "Are n't you glad, Cherry, we are to perform to-morrow? for then we shall have a good supper, and, perhaps, a bit of roast meat."

"Cherry," as she had called him, expressed his pleasure by a look; and with this delightful anticipation the two children went out to make up their nest in the wagon, that now stood under the cover of the cart-shed. Each cleared a little spot, and then nestled down under the straw and some bits of carpet, where they soon fell as sweetly asleep as if they had been the offspring of a prince and were covered with down and satin. The eye of a merciful and compassionate God rested as lovingly upon those two poor little wanderers, and guardian angels kept watch as tenderly over them, as if they had been the children of wealth and state.



## CHAPTER II.

### THE FIRST MORNING.



**T**HE bright morning sun of a cool autumn day lighted up with its clear rays even the narrow street in which Herr Lionet had taken up his quarters. He had already gone out to superintend the putting up of his handbills; and the children, in full costume, were walking hand in hand through the town.

Zepherine, daintily arrayed in a little black velvet bodice and a white skirt, with a wreath of flowers upon her head twined with her black hair, and the tiniest of boots upon her tiny feet, seated herself upon a corner-stone and looked laughingly down at the boy, who stood leaning his head sadly and weariedly against her side. "Are you





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sleepy, poor Cherubino?" she asked, with good-humored mockery of his sad little face. "Go back to the wagon and go to sleep again; it's only eight o'clock in the morning."

"I am so cold," murmured the child; and he nestled closer to her.

"So, you are so cold? Oh, you poor little wonder-child!" said the girl laughingly; "and yet you have got on a little velvet jacket like a young prince, — as you are, — and a vest, and I don't know what all. Just look at my white frock and bare arms, and I'm not cold a bit!" and she threw her little white arms round his neck. "You poor, frozen bruddie! creep into the big drum; the wind don't blow in there."

"And it will keep growing colder and colder every day, and then winter 'll come and everything will freeze," sobbed little Cherubino. Poor little fellow! She knew no more than himself, or she might have told him how tenderly the dear God tempers the winds to the shorn lamb; — but, poor little wanderers as they were, no one had ever taught them of the dear God at all; they

had no one to whom to turn in their misery but each other.

Zephirine tried to comfort him as well as she could. She folded him a great deal more closely to her, and stroked his cheek, and said, to cheer him,—“ Yes, in winter it is bad enough ; but who knows what kind of a room we shall have, maybe, to live in when it does come. And aren't you glad that Herculina is n't going to be with us any more, too ? Oh, she was so big and fat ! If she had been with us now, I don't believe the fat landlord would have let us into the house at all. But you know that we always have our performances in nice warm rooms in winter ; and this winter, too, we shall have the pillow to sleep on, because Herculina is gone ; and that will make us warmer. And don't you remember how we lived, last winter, in the baker's house, and how his wife used so often to give us those nice rolls and cakes that the rich people would n't buy because they were dry ? Maybe we'll get with some just such good folks this time too ; and then, when summer comes back, oh, it will be so nice

and warm! and we'll go riding through all the beautiful towns, and boil coffee in the woods, and make nests in the hay to sleep in; and then François will get us fruit from the trees! — Oh, that will be so nice!" — And the little creature clapped her hands with delight at the anticipated joys of the still far-off summer, while winter stood before the door. She might have said, too, — "God will certainly provide for us in some way, for He feeds the birds of the air, and He will not neglect us;" — but that she did not know.

The boy did not seem much cheered by the picture she held out. "Oh," said he, "I wish I were not obliged to go anywhere again. I wish I could live in a fine, large house, and sleep in a nice soft bed, and have good clothes, and go to school every day, like other boys."

"To school!" laughed Zephirine: "that's what you want, is it? Why, in the schools they beat you, papa says."

"Not if you are good and industrious; nobody is punished unless he deserves it," retorted Cherubino, rather decidedly. "The baker's son told me that."

"And children that go to school can't dance," persisted Zephirine. "See here: this is the way they dance!" and, bending forward until she was almost double, she hopped up and down, and swung herself round till she looked like a young bear, and Cherubino was forced, in spite of himself, to laugh outright. But he soon became grave again, and said, "That's nothing; I don't care about dancing; learning is a great deal better."





## CHAPTER III.

### THE BAPTISM.



THE children got up and began to walk rapidly to warm Cherubino, until their attention was suddenly drawn to what was passing about them. They had just reached the inn again, when a procession came slowly up a side-street:— an old woman, carrying in her arms a child covered with a large silken wrapper, that hung almost to the ground; she was followed by two children, apparently of about the same age as Zephirine and her brother, dressed in most beautiful holiday clothes, — the little boy making now and then very eager attempts to catch and pull off the baby's silken cover, and at every attempt finding himself held back by a stately, richly

dressed lady, who, with her noble-looking husband, brought up the rear.

"Oh, what is that?" asked Cherubino, eagerly.

"A baptism; h-s-h!" whispered Zephirine, who knew rather more of the world. She spoke very softly, for the procession was close to them.

"What are they going to do?" asked the boy, in tones as low as her own.

"That I don't know myself," replied the sister. "Come, let us go with them. Papa won't come for a good while yet." So the two little things sped along after the procession until they came to a church. Here, unobserved, they slipped in through a side-door, next to the one through which the procession had entered. It was the first time in their lives that they had ever been in a church; and they gazed with surprise, mingled with instinctive awe, upon the carved arches, the exquisitely stained glass windows, the magnificent painting that was behind the altar, and the elegant velvet hangings of desk and pulpit. It was a world of wonders such as neither of them had ever before dreamed of.

The boy took off his cap, for he saw all the rest, men and boys, do so; the girl folded her little hands, in imitation of the little girl with the braids of fair hair, but had not the least idea why. She dared not move from the spot where she stood; she scarcely dared to breathe; but with intense interest watched what they were going to do with the baby, from which the silken covering had now been taken.

That the gentleman in the long robe was a clergyman, Zephirine knew very well; but she had no idea what a clergyman was, and listened with eagerness as in a dream to the holy words he said over the child. First a font was filled with water, into which the clergyman then dipped his hand, poured a little on the baby's face, and made with his wet fingers the sign of a cross, — saying as he did all this, "In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." The astonished children had not the least idea of what he meant, and afraid to ask those around them, kept pondering the matter in their own minds.

At last the prayers, the speaking, and read-

ing came to an end, the baby was again wrapped up, and everybody seemed ready to go. The two little wanderers slipped out as softly as they had entered, and took their stand before the door. It happened that in coming out the children of the party came last, for the baby had begun to cry, and the stately lady, who it seemed was its mother, went forward to soothe it. Zephirine, fearless in her nature, summoned her courage, and taking hold of the little girl's dress as she passed, asked, "Will you tell me what it was that they did to the pretty baby?"

Little Marie fastened her great blue eyes upon the strange child, so pretty in her fantastic dress, and answered pleasantly, though with evident surprise,—"Why, don't you know? That's our new little brother, and they've been baptizing him."

"Yes? And what for? What's baptizing?" demanded Zephirine.

"How stupid!" interposed Theodore, Marie's brother. "Everybody who knows anything knows what it is. Could people have no name to call him by all his life but 'Baby'?"

“Oh! but that’s not all, Theodore,” interrupted Marie. “Papa could have given him a name, for that matter, as well as the pastor; but don’t you remember what mamma told us yesterday? They baptize babies because the Holy Jesus said once, ‘Suffer little children to come unto me;’ and so, when a baby is baptized, then it belongs to the Holy Jesus for good and all, and he sends angels down here to watch over it and take care of it.”

“Well, but who is the Holy Jesus?” demanded Cherubino, timidly.

Marie and Theodore looked at each other in astonishment. Such a large boy not to know who was the Holy Jesus! “Please to tell me,” asked Theodore gently, “are you heathen children, such as papa says the missionaries go to? Is that the reason why you don’t know who the Holy Jesus is?”

“No, we are n’t anything,” replied Zephirine, innocently.

“But” — interrupted Cherubino, eagerly, rather mortified at the opinion their new friends were likely to form of their ignorance, — “we know that the dear God once

made all the world,—not the houses, but the trees, and the rivers, and the animals, and all that.”

“Oh, well then, you *do* know something,” said Marie kindly, for she was not willing to pain the pretty, strange children. “See here! Let me show you,” said she, leading them back to the church and pointing to an elegant picture behind the altar, happy in her childish wisdom to be able to teach so much to others. “Now look up there, and you will see a man on a cross: that is the Holy Jesus! And there he is again in that picture up in the big window. Once he came down here to live in the world for a little while, for the people had got to be so wicked that he came to tell them about the blessed God, who was his Father, and what they must do to please Him. He promised them then, over and over again, that, if they did it, after they died they should rest in Paradise, and after the resurrection he would take them up to heaven, and they should live there forever, and ever, and ever. And mamma says the Holy Jesus always keeps his word: if he tells you he will do a thing, he will surely do

it. But if he had n't come, we should never have known by ourselves what to do ; and so we should have lived on in wickedness and misery, and when we died we should all have gone to live with Satan.

“He knew that the wicked people who lived in the world would treat him very shamefully ; he knew that they would beat him, and spit upon him, and even kill him ; but then he loved the poor people so much that he thought he would rather bear that than have them left in so much danger ; so he would come. It was his own choice : he might have stayed up in the beautiful sky where he was before ; up there with the dear God, his Father. So then the Holy God said that for his sake he would forgive all those who showed by their actions that they loved him. He said that, no matter how bad any persons had once been, if they would only see how bad they were, and think about the Holy Jesus, and how he had died for their sakes, and feel sorry that they had had any hand in making him suffer so much, and love him for doing it for them, then he would forgive them *every* thing. He would forget

all their wickedness, and let them be his children, and live in the sky after they were raised from the dead!"

"But how could they live anywhere after they were dead?" interrupted Zephirine, with a perplexed expression on her little face.

"Oh, not the part of them that you can see, you know," explained Marie. "When people die, their friends put their bodies into a coffin and bury them; but there's something inside of them — the soul — that can't die, and never does: that's the thing that slips out of you when you are dying, and goes to live somewhere else, until by and by your body rises from the grave, and joins your soul again. But that's not all," continued the child, her face glowing with the excitement of her own story. "Oh, it's not half. I know a great, great many most beautiful stories about it; but I can't tell them to you all at once!"

The little strangers listened with open mouths, though they could not altogether understand all this. "But where did you come from, that you don't know about the Holy Saviour Jesus?" asked Theodore.

"Oh, we come from all over," replied Zephirine. "We travel about and have to dance, and so we can't go to school."

"But it's from our mammas that we learn about the Holy Saviour Jesus," said Marie. "Why don't yours tell you?"

"Because she's dead," replied the little girl. "She's been dead ever so long. — We've got a papa; but perhaps he don't know about it, for he used to live in France, and I suppose it did n't happen there. We used to have a Herculina; but *she* was n't any mamma!"

"What is a Herculina?" demanded Theodore. "That's a queer name for a thing."

"It's a great fat woman, with a face ever so red," broke in Cherubino. "Oh, ever so fat and red! She did n't use to be bad to us, only she ate so much that there never was anything left over for us. In the mornings she washed our clothes, and sometimes she mended them; sometimes she cooked, too, when we had anything to be cooked; and then, in the evenings, she performed, — she threw great heavy irons ever so far, — and sometimes she laid down and

let people hammer and pound on her with all their might, and it never hurt her at all."

"And where is she now?" asked Theodore again, more and more puzzled by all he heard of his new friends and their mode of life.

"Once, when we were in Stuttgard," replied Cherubino, "at the fair there were some people in the next booth to ours, with some big red oxen to show; and they were jealous of us. When papa played on the hand-organ to make the people come to look at us, they would drum so loud that nobody could hear him. Well, they wanted to have Herculina for theirs, and first she would n't; then one of them got married to her; so now she's gone off with them. Maybe now she lets the big oxen stamp on her, and it don't hurt her."

The children would gladly have had a much longer talk; for the singular life the young strangers lived in the rude world was as new to them as their quiet home-life was to the poor little wanderers; but suddenly a well-dressed maid sprang towards them, exclaiming, "Why, darlings! why don't you

make haste? Don't you want any of the coffee and baptism-cakes?"

This broke up the party at once. Marie did not, however, in her haste forget to shake hands with the little strangers; and they, in their turn, talked for the rest of the day of nothing but their adventure. Marie and Theodore went home, as eager to taste the baptism-cakes as their parents were to learn something of the pretty strangers who had never heard of the Holy Jesus. Meanwhile Zephirine and Cherubino walked slowly back to the inn, and reached it just in time to see François come out and make the most violent gestures to them to come quickly, for it was time for the grand ride through the town to take place.



## CHAPTER IV.

### THE PERFORMANCE.



RANÇOIS was so uneasy at the absence of the children, and so delighted at seeing them return in time, that he gave them no scolding for having gone off. Two miserable-looking nags (for a small boy had, during the night, come up with another that had been left at a village to rest) stood decked off in their showy blue covers, which Herculina had carefully patched before she went; the children were lifted upon them; Herr Lionet, in the costume of a knight, held one of the horses by the bridle; François, as a clown, wearing upon his head a high, party-colored cap trimmed with lappets of all kinds of colors, leaped and danced with the most extraordi-

nary grimaces before the cavalcade, blowing a trumpet from time to time. In every public square, and in front of all the most distinguished-looking houses, he halted, blew his trumpet, and cried at the top of his voice upon the inmates to come out, for this was a day to be remembered forever. And here were things to be seen that they might never again have a chance to look at. "See, ladies and gentlemen! Here are the two wonderful children, Zephyrine and Cherubino! The lovely fairy, Zephyrine, is lighter than the swallow that flits through the air: does she stretch out her little foot?—Bluh!—Does she fly over the great gate?—Vite!—Does she again spring back upon its pointed top?—B-r-r-r!"

Thus they passed on,—François as clown, trumpeter, and herald, proclaiming the wonderful acts of his master and the little ones, until presently they came to a noisy little house, filled to overflowing with school-children, when these all rushed out—for it was the hour of recess—and with shouts of laughter followed them. To all this the children were quite accustomed, and Zephyrine

had often amused herself and made the hubbub still greater by throwing nut-shells at the boys, or making faces at them. But to-day she sat quite still and silent, taking no notice of them; and Cherubino did not even raise his eyes. Poor little boy! his thoughts were all of what he had seen and heard that morning,—of the grand and beautiful church, of the baby upon whose forehead they had marked the sign of the cross, and of all that little Marie had told them about the Holy Jesus. And then, too, he thought how pleasantly their new friends were sitting in their dear home, with a good mamma to teach them everything, and a sweet little baby-brother to love; nice cakes and bread to eat, too; and his eyes filled with tears. He thought that they were so comfortable, perhaps, because they were so good and deserved it more than he did; and he said to himself, “Oh, why can’t I be a good boy too? Why can’t I have such nice things?”

The thoughts of the usually merry-hearted Zephirine, too, seemed to have all become sad; for once as the horse she rode came to a stand, and François, as clown, made him

perform one of his peculiar leaps, which obliged her to bend down almost to the saddle in order to keep her seat, she seized the opportunity to whisper to her father, — “Papa, was I ever baptized?”

Herr Lionet, through the bars of his helmet, looked at her in astonishment, as he replied, “You little goose! What nonsense have you got into your head now? Of course you were.”

“Where, papa?” persisted the child. “In a church?”

“No,” replied the father. “In a stable. It was in one of the frontier towns, I believe, and by a priest who happened to pass that way. But I don’t remember much about it myself.”

“Then do I belong, really and truly, to the Holy Saviour?” exclaimed the child, fairly trembling under her mingled feelings of delight and anxiety. “Do I, papa?”

“Of course you do, you foolish child!” he replied, almost angrily. “But have the goodness, if you please, to put all such stuff out of your head for the present, and make yourself look a little more animated. You won’t

‘take’ with the people with that face;” and he went on the other side of her, and led her horse forwards.

The ride through the town completed, the party again reached the inn, where the children were allowed to dine with their father. True, it was but a scant quantity that was put upon their plates, and the poor little creatures were v̄ery hungry; but then they were always allowed a good supper whenever the profits of the performances would enable them to afford it.

They would have been very glad to go out again after dinner, but they had already had a ramble, and then the professional ride through the town, so the father would not consent to it. He made them undress, put on their old, torn clothes, wrap themselves up in their scanty and ragged little cloaks to keep warm, and bade them stay in the room until it was time for the grand performance.

This latter order they obeyed very willingly, for they were afraid that if they went out again they might meet with their little friends of the morning, and they would have been greatly mortified at being seen in such trim;

so they huddled together in the warmest corner, and whispered to each other about what Marie had said. Cherubino, whose whole life was haunted by a desire to be and to live like other children, felt the desire now tenfold stronger: he wanted so much to hear more about the Holy Jesus, and his young heart was touched strongly by what had been already told him. The more lively Zephirine had become more accustomed to their mode of life, — for she had never known any other, and could conceive of no existence of which dancing and riding did not form a part, — but she earnestly longed to go to the beautiful church at least once more, if she could n't go every day, and to have a playmate like the little fair-haired Marie with her blue eyes. Dearly did she love Cherubino though, and strove hard to comfort him now. "But you know, Cherry darling," said she, "we have one another all the time, and I can tell you all that the little one told us."

Little "Cherry" shook his head sadly. The fat, good-natured landlord had given the children a treat, — a cup of coffee; and what a pleasure it was to drink it! They made it

last nearly all the afternoon, while their father amused himself by playing cards: he was happy, too, for he won a great deal of money, — so much, indeed, that the people at last insisted that he was a magician, and refused to play with him any more.

At last the evening came, and the children were again dressed and taken into a large room that was very poorly lighted and still more poorly warmed. Large numbers of people had assembled, drawn there, not by the pompous, wonder-promising handbills, but by their admiration of the pretty children that they had seen paraded through the streets. The greater number were servants, nursery-maids, and children; but there were mingled with them many young people, and some older ones of a much higher class.

In the very first row of benches sat Marie and Theodore with the Herr Winter, their father, a very rich merchant. Though it was his child's baptism-day, he had come to the inn, — not to see the performances of a strolling band, but to look for himself at the little strangers in whom his children had so deeply interested him.

François stood before the door, blowing his trumpet and beating the great drum beside him, in order to attract the passers-by, although the room was already full; then hastily slipping on his clown's jacket, he vaulted, with two somersaults, into the saloon, to the unspeakable delight of the audience.

Herr Lionet, in the dress of a knight, came forward, leading by each hand one of his children. For a moment he looked around him with a most dignified air, and the little boys on the back seats regarded him with absolute awe as he lifted his plumed helmet from his head and bowed so low that his large and pointed nose almost touched the floor. Cherubino, too, took off his little cap and made his obeisance; and Zephyrine made her courtesy with such inimitable grace that a shout of applause burst from every lip, and Marie really felt proud of her new acquaintance as she threw her a kiss with her hand. Then the performances began.

First François brought a table and set it before Herr Lionet, who was to exhibit some tricks of his art: they were like those that have been done at all shows of the same sort

for a hundred years back. François was to swallow a quantity of burning tow, which he did with the most comic expressions and inimitable grimaces of dislike. Then, amid peals of laughter, the hump upon his back was cut off, and upon the inside of his body, thus exposed, the tow was found converted into an endless length of linen tape. Herr Lionet next asked for a watch, which, amid loud cries from the spectators, he pounded up in a mortar : the fragments were shown about, then put into a bag and hung under the table ; and in a few moments the clown, with a sudden spring into the air, snatched the bag, and drew from it the watch, perfect and unharmed. Then he exhibited several very pretty tricks with cards, which the clown, in the most ludicrous manner, attempted to imitate.

Presently the people, who were anxiously awaiting the turn of the children to appear, became wearied ; so the first act came to an end ; the table was removed. Herr Lionet appeared with a violin, François with a trumpet, and to this wretched music the children came forward and began the "tambourine-dance." Cherubino, with his little stick, stood

in the middle of the room to strike the tambourine as Zephirine glided over to him and he joined her in the dance. But the child stood there with the saddest of sad faces: the sight of the two children beside him had carried back his thoughts to the church, and his whole soul was centred there and in the home he longed for. He scarcely heard the notes that warned him it was time for his part, and saw only the threatening looks his father gave him.

But Zephirine, who lived in the dance, glided over to him with the most consummate grace, tinkled, with a merry laugh, the tambourine in his ear, drew him gently but gracefully forward, and circled round and round him so lightly and quickly that her feet scarce appeared to touch the floor, and played her part so well that the boy's silence and abstraction, if noticed at all, was regarded only as a foil to heighten, by contrast, the charm of his sister's movements. As the dance ended, she drew herself up with the suddenness of a whirlwind, raised herself upon her toes, and holding the tambourine high over her head, gave it a shake, a twirl,

and courtesied to the audience with the grace of a finished *artiste*.

A storm of applause followed. Those who were accustomed to the performances of skilful and famous artists looked with astonishment at the grace and dexterity of the child; and the tambourine, which at a sign from her father she passed around among the company, was filled with coins of a far higher value than was usual on these occasions.

When she came to Marie and Theodore, with a deep blush she drew back the tambourine, saying proudly but decidedly, as she shook her little head, "Nothing from you!" and was passing on. But they had come loaded with the cakes and confectionery from the baptismal feast: this she *must* take, whether she would or not. They watched, too, very earnestly to see what their father would contribute; Marie even whispered to him that she thought he ought to give at least a thaler; but he did not agree with her, and only whispered back again that he would speak with the little girl's father after all the rest were gone.



## CHAPTER V.

### THE CONVERSATION.



HE spectators gradually departed; though François, as he thought himself in duty bound, after so liberal a contribution, gave a few extra flourishes for their amusement. Marie and Theodore, though, stayed behind with their father; Cherubino joined them as they stood talking to Zephirine, and soon all four were earnestly engaged in conversation. Herr Lionet was quite at a loss to conceive where his children had made such a distinguished acquaintance; but Zephirine whispered him, — “ You know, papa, they are the children that were in the church this morning when their dear little baby brother was baptized; and they know, oh, *ever* so many such beautiful, *beautiful* stories about the Holy Saviour!”

But Herr Winter introduced himself to the father with the greatest politeness, and complimented him largely upon the remarkable talent of his little daughter. "Are they both your children?" he asked.

"Certainly, sir," was the reply; but it was given with an air of embarrassment that Herr Winter was not slow to perceive.

"You must have married very late in life," remarked the merchant again, looking first at the old, wrinkled face of the mountebank, and then at the young children.

"I did," said Lionet. "The little girl, that is, the two children, are the fruit of my *two* marriages. My first wife, a very talented circus-rider, unhappily left me and went off with a troop of rope-dancers. I associated myself afterwards with a second, who owned a small cabinet of wax figures, but she died at the birth of her child. The cabinet was unfortunately destroyed in the great fire at G——. My knowledge of natural magic, and the opening talents of my little daughter, have helped me thus far to get along. François I got in Alsatia. From

the boy I had promised myself much ; but he is nothing at all, — no ambition.”

“ You are a Frenchman, as my children learned from yours ? ”

“ An Alsatian,” replied Lionet. “ But I have lived a long time in Germany ; the present disturbed state of France is not favorable to the proper appreciation of the fine arts.”

Herr Winter smiled to hear a mountebank apply so high-sounding a term to his employment, and asked again, — “ But how do you expect, with your unsettled mode of life, to bring up your children properly and teach them what it will be needful for them to learn ? ”

“ They are still very young,” replied Lionet, who did not seem particularly well pleased with the examination to which his new acquaintance was subjecting him, — “ and by so complete a bodily training I think that their mental faculties will be extraordinarily developed.”

“ Indeed ! ” said the gentleman ; and he laughed again.

“ I had, at one time, an excellent servant,”

continued Lionet, "who used to teach the girl a good deal of what was necessary in the care of a house; and she was, at the same time, an 'Athlete' of wonderful strength. Since she married and left me, I have been in search of some lady whose services I could secure in taking care of and training my children as far as regards their persons and household duties, — when I would, myself, give them what little instruction they were old enough to need."

Herr Winter had no very strong faith either in the training of the "lady" of whom Herr Lionet was in search, or in the "instructions" of that gentleman himself. He did not wish, however, for the children's sake, to vex him; so he only expressed a wish that he would remain some time in Nuremberg, where his little girl was making so favorable an impression, and begged that both the children might be allowed to come often to his house. He felt deeply interested in the poor little things, and adopted this as the best mode of finding out what could be done for them; but he was resolved, at the same time, that all their intercourse with his

own should be carried on under his own eye.

While Cherubino and Zephirine refreshed themselves upon the long-promised "roast meat" — which, truth to say, the graceful little danseuse greatly needed — and the baptism-cakes that their little friends had brought for them, their father counted over the unusually large amount they had taken in for their performances; and Marie and Theodore hastened home to give their mother an account of all that they had seen and heard, and to describe — "if they could," as they said — the wonderful dancing of their new acquaintance. But bedtime, though for this evening so long postponed, came at last; and they laid themselves down upon soft, clean beds, after they had said a prayer at their mother's knee and felt the warm kiss of a mother's love; but the poor little wanderers knew neither, and crept under the straw in the wagon, to rest as best they might.

Zephirine had scarcely closed her eyes when Cherubino crept out of his corner and came to hers, where nestling closely to her side he whispered, "Sister!" — "What is it,

darling?" was the reply, as her two little arms were folded round him.

"The boy told me that every morning and every evening they said prayers, and then a holy angel was sent down out of heaven to take care of them."

"I did n't see any with him," replied Zephirine, rather doubtfully.

"Oh, no, you can't see it, but it's there, for all," said the child, earnestly. "His mother told him so."

"Oh, then, it must be true," answered the girl, her doubts all cleared up. "But what then?"

"I wish we could say prayers, too," said the little boy. "To-morrow Theodore is going to teach me one; but I wish I knew one to say to-night. It's so dreadful to have to dance and try to say and do funny things to get a little bit of money to buy something to eat! And then we don't get much; and we have to wear such ragged clothes, and dance and be funny even when we feel sick and tired, and have no mamma, or anybody to take care of us, but just make nests here in the straw to sleep in, as dogs do!"

Won't you try and see if you can't say a prayer?"

"Yes, I'll try," said Zephirine; and getting upon her knees, she folded her little hands and said solemnly,— "Please, dear Holy Saviour, we don't know how to say prayers, but we've been baptized. Please send down a holy angel to take care of us too, for we're all alone except papa and François, and have n't got any mamma."

Then, without a word, they lay down together, with a bundle of straw rolled up for a pillow, and fell sweetly asleep. That prayer of simple faith could not have been breathed in vain. Who can doubt that angels kept watch and ward over those poor little homeless wanderers as tenderly as if they had been laid upon down and covered with satin?





## CHAPTER VI

### THE SEARCH.



HE night after the performance the rich merchant walked up and down his pleasant room, deeply buried in thought. He was a Christian and a devoted servant of the Master to whom he had given himself; the wealth that Master had intrusted to his keeping he used, like a faithful steward, in the relief of those whom the Master sent to him to claim it, and never did the needy go empty from his door. With the means, God in his mercy had given him also the heart to supply the wants of the poor; and these two poor, motherless, homeless little children he could not banish for one moment from his mind. That there was hardly a possibility of their being well

brought up, was evident; and well he knew that to grow up in their present mode of life would make them lifelong vagabonds. But what could he do? Lionet would not part with the girl, — that was clear, — for she was his whole support. The boy was less profitable, and evidently loathed his work; the father might give him up. But would it be right to separate the children? Their love for each other seemed to be their only comfort now; it might be their only safety hereafter; for though the generous-hearted man would willingly have taken them to educate and bring up at his own expense, he felt almost sure that he would not be allowed to do it.

Suddenly he remembered how much embarrassment the man had exhibited whenever any allusion was made to the boy, and that he had spoken of him not only with indifference, but with absolute aversion. Then, too, he recollected that he had said the mother of the children had died immediately after the birth of the girl, and yet she was the elder of the two. There was some consciousness present to his mind of a connec-

tion between himself and that pretty boy, though he had seen him only that day for the first time in his life; he could not rid himself of it, nor could he make it comprehensible even to himself; so at last, tired with thinking, he went to bed.

“Good counsel comes in the night,” says a German proverb; and ere he closed his eyes, earnestly did the Herr Winter pray that God would show him what he was to do. The prayer was heard; he had appealed to the orphans’ God in behalf of the orphan, and the appeal was answered. The Frau Winter was altogether ignorant of the cause that made her husband spring so early, the next morning, from his bed, and hasten, half dressed, into another room. Still less could she imagine why, in that trim, he fell so eagerly to examining the contents of an old trunk in which he kept papers and memoranda. The children, when they went to call him to breakfast, stopped at the door in astonishment at finding the whole floor littered with papers, and their order-loving papa seated quietly in the midst of them. They stood and watched him as he seized

bundle after bundle, and ran his fingers along their edges to read their titles. But he did not observe them; he went on with his work until he got hold of an old newspaper, which he drew triumphantly forth and sprang joyfully to his feet. "I've found it! I've found it!" he exclaimed to his wife, who, with the recently baptized baby in her arms, sat on the side of the bed, not at all aware of what he was about.

"What have you found?" she asked, with a smile.

"I will tell you presently," replied the husband; for just then it occurred to him that no one would appreciate the discovery but himself. But when the children had been sent to school, he drew from his pocket the old paper, and asking her attention, read her an advertisement that was printed in both French and German, and ran as follows:—

"The Chevalier D'Ormond offers a reward of six hundred francs to any person who will give him any intelligence that may assist him in finding his only child, Leon. The probability is that he was carried off by his

nurse, a German, who at the breaking out of the French Revolution fled to her own country, and, as it is supposed, took him with her. The nurse's name was Margaret Rothe ; thus far, no trace of her has been found. The child was about fifteen months old ; he had no particular mark about him by which he could be recognized ; and it is not known whether many articles of value, which disappeared from my château at the same time, were taken by the woman or carried off afterwards by some of the revolutionary bands that came into that vicinity. I have, for the present, taken up my abode at Innspruck [here followed his address], and I earnestly entreat that any person or persons who can give me the slightest clew to the whereabouts of my child will do so immediately."

"Well, and what has that to do with us at this late day? An advertisement five years old!" asked the lady.

"Exactly because it is five years old," replied the husband. "I was then in the senate, as was also this Chevalier D'Ormond ; and he was, and had been for some time, seeking personally through all the

principal cities of Germany for this child. The circumstance I have often thought of; but this advertisement never came into my head until last night, at the performance I took the children to see. The little boy, Cherubino, attracted my attention, and set me to thinking where I had seen the child, or some one he strongly resembled. I thought of it until I went to bed last night, but all in vain until, I believe, I dreamed it. Certain it is that, when I awoke this morning, the image of the Chevalier stood plainly before me, — sad and wretched as I saw him last. Our Theodore was then just two years old, and our extreme happiness in him was, perhaps, the reason of the intense pity I felt for D'Ormond's loss."

"Yes, yes, I remember your telling me the story," said Frau Winter. "But what has put it into your head that this mountebank's child is the Chevalier's lost son?"

"In the first place, because the boy is as much like the Chevalier as son can be like father; then because he obeyed so unwillingly the old man's orders; and because the old fellow spoke of him" — The worthy

man lost his breath in the eagerness with which he summed up his reasons.

“What, then, do you suppose, became of the child at that time?” asked the wife. “How came it that the servant carried him off?”

“When the Revolution broke out,” replied Herr Winter, “the Chevalier was in Paris with his wife, who had gone there to seek medical advice for a disease under which she had suffered a long time; and his château, thus left without a master, was one of the first plundered by the outlaws. The child was alone with the servants; and they, blinded by terror, fled in all directions. The nurse, whom he described to me as a very kind-hearted, but giddy-headed person, pretended to fly too, but was afterwards seen in the company of a very profligate man, who had once lived as a house-servant with the Chevalier. D’Ormond was himself obliged to fly, and took his wife, whom the loss of this child had made dangerously ill, to a German watering-place. From there he sent out messengers in every possible direction, and used every possible means to find

the little fellow ; but the wife was too ill to allow him to leave her to seek him personally, and the unsettled state of the country made his efforts all in vain. She died in a very short time.

“ After that he set out himself, and traversed all Germany, fruitlessly. He then withdrew this advertisement from the papers, and until this morning I had entirely forgotten it.”

Though the Frau Winter still had her doubts as to the boy's identity, her husband resolved not to relax his efforts until he had come at the truth of the matter. He wrote immediately to the Chevalier, directing to the address given in the paper, and begged his wife to do all she could to encourage the visits of the children.





## CHAPTER VII.

### THE PLAYMATE.



REAT was the delight of the Winter children when their papa gave them leave to invite their new friends to come and spend the next day with them, after their lessons were over; but *their* father was not at all pleased. He seemed unwilling to allow them to associate with strangers except in his presence; yet he dared not refuse, lest he should awaken suspicion; and so the poor little things were dressed and allowed to set out with their kind-hearted entertainers.

The delight of the little Winters was still greater when they really had their young guests by the hand, and were leading them through the streets. Even the street-chil-

dren looked surprised at seeing the son and daughter of the rich and particular Herr Winter walking with the two little circus-dancers, and, besides, taking them to their home with the greatest possible pleasure. The door of the grand house opened readily at their summons, and the whole four danced joyfully in.

The first thing was to take them to the side of mamma's bed, and show them the new brother. Madame Winter had always entertained a great dislike for all itinerant performers, or, indeed, for any who earned their bread by making an exhibition of themselves; but one glance at the sweet faces of the little creatures before her awakened all the sympathies of her mother-heart, and especially the gentle, sad countenance of the boy. She smoothed his soft dark hair, and made him tell her all about their mode of life, and their amusements.

"But, mamma, you should see Zephirine dance!" cried Marie.

"Yes, yes, mamma!" exclaimed Theodore, with delight; and, although the lady declared that, without seeing it, she fully be-

lieved already that Zephirine could dance very beautifully, the children insisted upon giving her the evidence of her own eyes. The folding-doors that opened from the bedroom to the sitting-room were thereupon thrown open, and Cousin Pauline — who, for the present, was there to look after the house, the mamma, and the new baby — was seated at the piano. The tambourine Zephirine would willingly have brought, if she had thought of it; but an old toy, hung with bells, served the purpose very well. Cherubino, to-day, was of no sort of use in their plays and amusements. He sat with sad and fixed eyes, looking at the mother and her baby, and scarcely spoke even to answer a question. But Zephirine needed not help from him. At the first note of the fine music, every nerve in her body seemed to start into life; her feet appeared scarcely to touch the floor; she glided from place to place almost as lightly as a bird flits through the air, and never in her life before had Cousin Pauline played for one who seemed to feel so sensitively every tone. The servants gathered about the door and looked on with open

mouths ; the children clapped their hands with delight, but the mother's eyes filled with tears — she hardly knew why — as the graceful child ended, and, with eyes uplifted to her face, courtesied before her.

“ Who taught you to dance so, little one ? ” she asked.

“ After papa's wax-figure cabinet was burned up,” replied the child, “ we lived a little while with the ladies and gentlemen that play in the theatre, and there was a very dark ma'm'selle among them who taught us, though we were very, very little children then. Then papa had a quarrel with the director, and so we came away with François ; then, after that, we got Herculina, — she used to be with a menagerie before that.”

“ And could she dance, too ? ” asked the Frau Winter.

“ She — dance ? ” and the girl laughed aloud, a clear, ringing laugh, like a bell, and shook her head. “ But whenever we came to a great town, papa always took us to see the ballet ; then I saw how they did it, and I taught Cherubino.”

“ But did you not learn other things, too ? ” asked the lady. “ Did they not teach you to sew, and knit, and read pretty books ? ”

The child sighed and shook her head, suddenly sobered down. “ No, not one of them. Oh, how I should love to learn all those things ! But then, madame, I would not like to sit in the school all day, nor to stay always in the room ; it is very pleasant to dance ; and when I am large enough I am to have a pretty little pony, and learn to be a rider : that will be nice ! ”

“ The rope-dancer blood,” thought the lady, and shook her head ; then, looking with increased interest at the boy, she said aloud :

“ And how is it with you, little man ? Do you think that nice, too ? ”

“ No, I don’t like to dance,” sighed the child ; “ but they make me do it. I don’t like to dance and to travel about all the time.”

The mother felt her heart yearn, but she would not yield ; she left them to their play, while she gave orders for milk and crackers to be brought for their refreshment. Marie then brought her doll and its clothes, a most

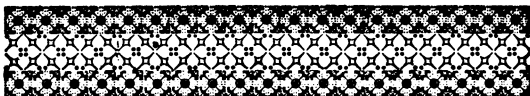
extravagant delight to Zephirine, for she had never seen one before, except in the shop-windows as she passed. It was, indeed, a very beautiful doll, and as beautifully dressed as though a milliner and dress-maker had been employed to do it; and never had its little owner enjoyed playing with it as much as now that she saw the admiration of her new friend.

Theodore entertained Cherubino with his wooden soldiery and his picture-books; the former did not seem to interest him, but the books he seized eagerly; and Theodore found full employment in telling him of what was in them, and answering his questions.

Then they played Hide-and-Seek, Guess my Flower, — What's my Name, — and many more games of the same sort; but Theodore expressed great dissatisfaction with Cherubino's "dreadfully long name," as he called it, and announced his intention of calling him henceforth Bino, or Rubi. The matter, after some discussion, was settled by their all deciding upon Bino; and Zephirine was to allow herself to be called Zephie. So passed the evening amid play, and laugh-

ter, and all too soon came François, to take them back to the inn. To tell the truth, they were glad it was night; for, though they hardly knew why, they were ashamed to be seen going through the streets with the clown for a companion.





## CHAPTER VIII

### THE DEPARTURE.



**M**EANWHILE Herr Winter waited with the utmost impatience for news from the Chevalier D'Ormond, or for the Chevalier himself; but after five days had passed, there came a letter from the proprietor of the hotel in which he had resided at Innspruck, saying that he had left that place and taken up his residence in Rhenish Prussia, the native place of the missing nurse, in the hope that he might there, in some way, get news of his child. The letter had been immediately forwarded to him, but it might be some time before he could either come or write.

Herr Winter was almost sick at the

thought, for it was impossible to detain Lionet any longer. The girl, to be sure, was constantly successful; but there was so little variety in the performances of Lionet himself and François, that they *could* not remain long in any one place. He looked, too, day by day, with less satisfaction upon the intercourse of his children with those of the merchant: the children themselves enjoyed it, and reaped solid benefit from it, but the boy showed daily more and more dislike for "the art," as the mountebank persisted in calling it; and only Zephirine's smiling coaxings, all-powerful as she was with her father, saved the poor little fellow from many a severe beating.

The companionship of the children had now continued ten days: ten days full of pleasure and enjoyment it had been, especially for the little strangers. The good Mamma Winter, as soon as she had satisfied herself that their society was not likely to be productive of evil to her own little ones,—that they would not learn from them any ungainly, awkward habits, any rough, rude manners, or any wicked, immoral language and ideas,—

opened her heart to them. She furnished out to them, from the wardrobes of her own children, suits of good, warm, comfortable clothing, and several changes of linen; bade Pauline to teach little Zephie — who learned everything with the most astonishing readiness — to sew, and even to knit a little, and told Bino, better than Theodore could, what his little heart seemed to yearn to know, about the dear God and the Holy Saviour; and eagerly would the little fellow drink in every word.

On the eleventh day, at early dawn, the wagon, ready to start, stood before the door of the inn, and the children beside it, — far better clad for the journey than when they came. Near them, eagerly talking, but with grief-shadowed faces, were their little Nuremberg friends, with baskets, pockets, and hands filled with treasures for the travellers, — parting-gifts from Mamma Winter. Zephie had planned it admirably to return in the spring, and stay all through the warm weather, — the whole party indulging in pleasant anticipations of the enjoyment they would have in Herr Winter's beautiful gar-

den. "Then Bino will have nice red cheeks, perhaps," said Marie, laughing and stroking the boy's pale face. But Bino could not speak; his eyes were full of tears, and he could only look his farewell.

A little farther off stood the rich merchant, in close conversation with Herr Lionet. He did not allow him to observe his suspicions respecting the boy, but tried to lead him into conversation about him. "Do you not think," said he, "that the little fellow is too young for your profession?"

"No, indeed," said Lionet; "he used to do a great deal better; he is not wanting in natural grace, but the rascal is lazy; for the present it must rest there. Zephirine, the little witch, will bring him round, and the two will get on as well as ever, I suppose. The public always receive them well, and, in the mean time, his keeping is not expensive. Zephirine will have, one of these days, a brilliant run. When she has no more need of him, and he takes no more fancy to this, I must think of some other branch of the art for him. For natural magic he is not wide enough awake. I have thought of

training some white mice for him to exhibit, — fleas are a little too difficult and complicated. Don't know. 'Time brings wisdom.' "

"But he seems to have a great taste for learning," replied Herr Winter, shuddering at this picture of the poor child's future. "If you could find the means of giving him a good education, would you not like to have him fitted for some other profession?"

"I can't do any better for him," said Lionet, somewhat angrily. "He costs me" — He stopped suddenly. "I must see, I suppose, if I can't find some branch of my profession for which he is fit, and if I can't, why, I shall be glad to bind him to a good master."

With this he turned hastily and angrily away. Herr Winter could do no more. Lionet bade him a pompous farewell, and, with an aching heart, he found himself obliged to see the two children carried away. The whole household of the inn, servants and all, now came crowding about them; for the little creatures, especially the light-hearted Zephie, had become general pets. They had

made rich profits in Nuremberg, besides a very handsome present that had followed the performances of the previous day, directed, — “For the especial use of the Fräulein Zephirine.” Master, man, and horses, all looked in far better condition than when they arrived. With many tears the four children separated; only Theodore whispered softly to the weeping Cherubino, — “Don’t cry, Bino, — only girls cry.”

As long as the wagon was in sight, Zephie’s rosy face, and Bino’s little hand, waving his tear-wet pocket-handkerchief to the group they had just left, might be seen at the windows; then the Winter children were led by their father back to their own dear, good, peaceful home, while the little wanderers were going forth once more into the wide, cold world. Marie hid her little face, all swollen with weeping, on her mother’s bosom, and whispered softly, — “Mamma, let us pray to the dear God to take care of them.”



## CHAPTER IX.

### THE RECOVERY.



T was now several hours since the wagon and its company had left the town, and yet it had made no greater progress than might have been accomplished in half that time. Cherubino had laid his little aching head upon Zephirine's shoulder and fallen asleep, while she, with her arm wound round him like a little mother, sat thinking of the dear, happy days at Nuremberg, of the pretty doll, and all the beautiful playthings that Marie had given her at parting, and of all the wonderful things that might happen to them that winter. The Herr Lionet himself was dozing, when all were suddenly aroused from their dreams by a heavy jolt, which brought the

lumbering vehicle to a stand, and at the same moment there came an abusive outburst from François. Herr Lionet got out to see what was the matter. An express post-chaise had come in contact with them; François was vehemently abusing "the German brutes," as he called those who occupied it; the postillion was swearing at the heavy old cart; and a gentleman alighted, in the midst of the confusion, to apologize for the accident, and see what damage had been done. He was a young, but very pale man, dressed in deep mourning. Herr Lionet, who looked upon himself as quite the equal of the richest man in the kingdom, was proceeding to assure him it was nothing of consequence, when the stranger's eye chanced to rest upon François. After one eager, searching look, he grasped him by the collar, exclaiming, — "Is it you, you wretch? — What have you done with my child?"

François, who would as soon have thought of seeing the heavens fall as of encountering this man, lost all power in his grasp. Pale as a corpse, and with chattering teeth, he gasped out, "Oh, have mercy on me, Mon-

sieur le Chevalier ; let me go ! He is alive in there."

"In where ?" demanded the Chevalier D'Ormond, for it was he.

A little of the old spirit of the man returned, and with a sneer he called out, "My charming young Master Wonder-child, dance out here, quickly !"

"And this is what you have made of my boy !" exclaimed the Chevalier, almost beside himself with rage ; and he went up to the Herr Lionet, who stood trembling on one side. At this moment the two frightened children thrust out their little heads. Ordering his attendants to keep guard upon the men, the Chevalier went up to them, and without noticing the girl, lifted out little Cherubino in his arms, carried him to the brightest sunlight he could find in the street, and gazed long and eagerly into the eyes of the poor terrified boy ; then, bursting into tears, he sobbed out, "Yes, yes ; it is ! it is ! There are her eyes !" and breathless with the suddenness of the whole thing, he seated himself upon a bank with the child in his arms, and stroking his hair and his cheek, and covering

him with kisses, could only articulate, again and again, "My child! my long-lost child! Yes, you are my child!"

Although all this had happened so suddenly, the boy seemed to take in at once the whole idea, and nestled trustingly in the arms of his unknown father, into whose face he looked smilingly up; but poor little Zephirine knew not what to make of it: she turned from one to the other and questioned them in vain; no one was at leisure to give her an answer. Lionet and François knew very well what was before them; they made signs to each other to slip off and get away while the Chevalier's attention was taken up with the child; but that was not so easily done. The poor broken-down hacks that drew the wagon had been hurt by the concussion, and limped badly; so that the efforts necessary to make them move attracted the attention of the Baron, who started up and walked towards them. "What we have to say to each other," said he, "cannot be said here upon the public road. Go on; we are all bound for the same place; we will all go to the same inn at Nuremberg, and can settle our business there."

Pleased or displeased, Lionet again entered his vehicle, and François resumed his place as coachman. The Chevalier von Ormond took the boy in his arms into his own carriage, and ordered his driver to follow closely the equipage of the mountebank and keep an eye upon it. As he watched them, they watched each other; for each was greatly afraid that the other would escape, and leave him to bear alone the responsibility. In this way they returned to the house that they had so lately left.





## CHAPTER X.

### EXPLANATIONS.



T the door, when they had all dismounted, Von Ormond took the two children by the hand and led them into the little parlor, where he left them together to explain to each other what seemed so very like a dream, while he went into an adjoining apartment and secured the two men until he had had a satisfactory talk with them. While that conversation is going on, we will take the opportunity of relating to the reader some of the events that had led to this extraordinary scene, and how François had been so soon recognized by the Chevalier D'Ormond; or, as his name and title would be expressed in German, the Herr Baron von Ormond.

François Desbordes, under his real name of Johann Brenner, had been a house-servant in the employ of the Chevalier, and was dismissed for dishonesty and many other crimes. Without the knowledge of the Chevalier, he took up his abode in the neighborhood of the château, where he still kept up his intimacy with the child's German nurse, Margarethe, who was an old friend of his, and with whom he now professed to connect himself as her husband.

At the commencement of the Revolution in France, and of that horrible state of affairs so appropriately called "the Reign of Terror," the dwellings of the overthrown nobles were, under the mask of law, plundered and seized upon by the mob and the soldiery. Johann was one of the first to take advantage of the opportunity of bettering his own fortunes by robbing his master and others whose possessions were within his reach. The Chevalier had, at first, thought of flight; but just then he was in Paris with his wife, for whom he was anxious to procure better medical help than could be had in the provinces; and his child had been left in the charge of its nurse.

A little observation, however, showed him that a speedy return to his estate would be the very best means of securing that from pillage, as well as of saving his own life and the lives of his wife and son. As soon, therefore, as his wife's condition and the state of the roads would allow it, he returned thither.

But in the mean time Johann had taken advantage of his absence to break, with a party of his comrades, into the château, and create such an alarm among the timid servants, that they fled in all directions, and left him complete control of the premises. He had no idea of becoming a soldier under the Republic; the dress was assumed only to suit present purposes. He persuaded Margarethe that their master had been condemned to lose his head, like all the rest of the French nobles who had not been fortunate enough to get out of the country, and thus his property would be left without an owner; so what they did n't take somebody else would; and therefore, he said, her scruples were ridiculous.

Thus both secured whatever money or jewels they could find, and went off with it. The child he had not the most remote idea

of taking ; but Margarethe, who had, after all, a woman's heart, and was devotedly fond of her little charge, positively refused to do as he wished, or to move one step from the château without the boy.

The little Leon was therefore carried to Margarethe's home ; but it was only for a short time. The consciences of both were too ill at ease to allow them to stay in one place. Constant exposure, and this unaccustomed wandering life, made the woman very ill, and instead of settling down comfortably to enjoy their ill-gotten wealth, they roamed about, year after year, as homeless, friendless vagabonds.

“ Vengeance is mine ; *I* will repay, saith the Lord.” And He kept truly the promise. The canker-worm of guilt ate out the heart of every pleasure ; the riches taken so wickedly could not purchase the happiness bought with the gains of honest toil ; the curse of the Lord was upon them, and they could buy only curses and misery until they had wasted away into nothingness.

At last the woman died, beseeching her betrayer, with her last breath, to find the

child's friends and give him to their care ; for she truly believed that, as Johann had told her, his father and mother had perished.

But Johann had other designs. Perhaps, could he have done so without interfering with them, he would gladly have complied with her wish ; for he remembered sometimes in his debasement and anguish that he too had been once a gentle and innocent little boy at his mother's side ; he thought sometimes of the holy words she had then spoken, of the little prayers she had taught him to lisp ; and he wondered sometimes if the dear God, for the sake of her love and pure goodness, would not forgive him for all that he had done since those blessed days. Margarethe's illness and death, too, had softened his heart. It is hard to see those to whom we are bound by kind feelings suffer ; and Johann did love the poor creature whom he had led astray as much as he could love anything now, since he had become a wicked, sin-cursed man. It is dreadful, too, to look upon a face that we have been used to see animated with life and thought, and find it cold and fixed, as if every thought of the soul that once

dwelt there were absorbed in watching for the hour when it should be summoned before the dread Judge. For all these reasons Johann would, if he could, have readily taken the boy back to his father ; but, besides that his sweet little face and gentle manners had so won his heart, as they did all others, that he had begun to love him as his own, and could not bear the idea, in his loneliness, of parting with him, the state of affairs in France would not allow him to return to that country, and his ill-gotten money was all gone : it had gone as it came.

Had he seen the advertisement of the Chevalier, these last difficulties would all have been obviated ; but as it was, he was glad to fall in with a band of travelling performers, headed by an old countryman and comrade of his own, Herr Lionet, who readily received him, because he hoped, by training the pretty boy to dance with his own little daughter, — not much older, — to make out of the beauty of the pair more than he could otherwise obtain.

François was not slow to see his object, though Lionet pretended a sudden attach-

ment was the cause of his eagerness to have the child. He made the old man pay a handsome sum for him ; and they, with an impious mockery of a holy sacrament, rebaptized him Cherubino.

From that time he passed as the Herr Lionet's own son, and was trained by him for his own profession. Thus the poor child began his wretched mode of life, and soon lost all remembrance of previous times and circumstances. But Leon was the child of many prayers : his gentle mother had bent over his little cradle day after day and committed him to God's holy keeping, when she felt that the hand of disease was soon to tear her from him ; and again the prayer of faith was answered.

Of all the wealth that François had taken from the château, he had now nothing left except one single signet-ring of great value, but which he dared not offer for sale, even in his greatest extremity, because it bore the Von Ormond coat of arms, and might lead to his detection in consequence.

It was from these circumstances that the Chevalier, when he first began his search for

the child, could learn nothing of him, even in Margarethe's home. So he took up his abode in the neighborhood, and made frequent excursions into the surrounding parts, in order to become more intimately acquainted with the people, and by winning upon them to see if he could not interest them in his object, and draw from them some part of what he felt sure they knew, but feared to communicate to a stranger lest they should compromise a friend. And he was at last so far successful as to learn that she had returned and for some little time remained there with the child and a man whom he had no difficulty in recognizing as François (or Johann).

It was very soon after learning thus much, — which, to be sure, did not go far, — that he received the letter of Herr Winter, mentioning his suspicions with regard to the boy, and accurately describing the two men with him, in one of whom he again recognized Johann. There was much room, no doubt, for hesitation ; but the wonderful agreement between the two stories made, to the eager heart of the father, positive proof out of what to any one else would have been only

a reason for hope. So, without delay, he set out for Nuremberg, and, led by the hand of a gracious and pitying Father, met with the accident from the mountebank's cart.

More thankful than his words could express, the father now held his boy to his heart as one would hold a valued treasure, found after long and weary search, but of the possession of which he could hardly, even yet, believe himself sure. What he at first saw to identify to his mind the face of the child, was the strong resemblance to his dead mother; for, although we have omitted to mention it, the first news of the loss of her boy had done more than even her cureless disease to dry up the fountains of her frail life, and a few weeks saw her laid in the grave. But perhaps the angel for which the little Cherubino, the Wonder-child, so trustingly prayed, had been sent to guard him.

A truly happy heart is very forgiving, and a Christian forgives even as he hopes to be forgiven. Therefore, though the Chevalier might lawfully have visited upon both Lionet and François the utmost rigors of the law, first for the robbery and then for their treat-

ment of the child, he was too happy, too humble a Christian, to use his power. He dared not say that, in all the same circumstances, he would not have done as badly. And therefore he not only spared them both, but even promised to refund to Lionet the money he had paid François for the child, and what had been expended on him since.





## CHAPTER XI.

### LEAVE-TAKING.



**W**HEN the Chevalier returned to the little parlor, the children still sat together as he had left them. Zephirine, always so much more quick to take an idea than Cherubino, now, however, could not comprehend in the least what had happened. But Leon, for so we must henceforth call him, understood fully one thing, and that was, that "the new gentleman" was his own dear father, and now he would no more be obliged to dance, or be beaten for refusing; he even maintained this in direct opposition to Zephirine, — though it was the first time he had ever been known to contradict her, — while she tried by all manner of arguments to convince him that "he belonged to the very same papa that she did."

As the Chevalier entered, followed by the two men, he sat down, and taking Leon on his knee, carefully and clearly explained to him all that had occurred, and that he was his own and only son. The poor little fellow asked for no proof. Unspeakably happy, he wrapped his little arms about his father's neck, and clung to him as if he could never be torn from him again. But with true Christian charity, the Chevalier had given this explanation in such a way as not to stir up in the child a single unkind feeling towards either of his former keepers. To François the boy had always felt a sort of attachment; for never had an unkind word or act come from him, and to the utmost of his power the man had petted and indulged him; but with Papa Lionet his weakness, delicacy, and gentleness had always been an annoyance, and the poor little fellow had had a full proof of it. To part from him was no trial.

But how was he to leave Zephirine? There sat the poor little girl in the same arm-chair into which they had both been in the habit of creeping, to love and comfort each

other in their sorrows ; her tiny hands were folded upon her lap, and silently, but with streaming eyes, she gazed upon Cherubino lying in his father's arms. One thing she understood now very plainly, — that he did not belong to her, that he never had belonged to her. Amid all her sorrows, this was the deepest grief she had ever known.

The landlord now entered the parlor and announced that the dinner for the gentleman and the little master was ready in the private room. Lionet had also ordered refreshment, and for him he now laid, somewhat contemptuously, a couple of plates at one end of the public table. The Chevalier rose to go, taking Leon by the hand; and he in his turn extended a hand to Zephirine, saying, — “ Zephie must come too, papa.”

The father hardly knew how to act in the circumstances ; but the boy refused to move a step without his companion, and her sweet little face pleaded eloquently as she stood hesitating and sorrowful at the door ; for her father had motioned her to stay there.

The Chevalier took them both by the hand,

ordered another plate to be placed for the little girl, and gave them everything he could think of that was nice. But there was little eaten. The little ones sat with their hands locked, while poor Zephie gazed tearfully at Bino, whose whole face glowed with quiet happiness as he laid it on his father's breast.

After dinner the Chevalier took from his pocket-book several bank-notes, and walked with them up to the mountebank. "Although I am not rich," said he, — "for I have thus far been able to procure the restoration of only a part of my property, — I will gladly give you gold for the possession of my child. You will find there the full amount that you paid for him, and something over, which I wish you to employ for the benefit of your little daughter; for I learn that she has been a kind companion to him through his unhappy childhood. I now bid you farewell. Leon, tell them all 'good-bye,' and then we will go."

This order came rather suddenly upon Leon. The Herr Lionet, to tell the truth, was greatly astonished at the large amount

of the Chevalier's gift, and had no longer the courage to assume his gentlemanly airs. It was with some timidity that Leon offered him his hand : he hardly knew how to take leave of a person whom he had so long looked up to as a father, though an unkind one, and whom he had respected as a parent, though he feared him as a tyrant. To François, down whose cheeks the warm tears were streaming, — for he did dearly love the little fellow, — the boy gave a hearty kiss. But Zephirine ! How could he part from her ? He clung to her ; and when his father, his arrangements all completed, came to take him away, the two stood there, locked in each other's arms, neither willing to leave the other.

“ Father, dear father, please take Zephie with us,” sobbed the child. “ Oh, I can't go away from Zephie ! Oh, papa, you don't know how beautifully she dances ! ” The poor little creature did not dream that he was urging the very strongest argument possible against the gratification of his request. The Chevalier's heart had, from the first moment that he had been able to notice the

child, warmed toward her ; and as the kind devoted friend of his otherwise friendless boy, he would gladly have done anything to promote her welfare. But though a Christian, the Chevalier D'Ormond was also a man, with a man's nature and a worldly training ; and it would have been strange if a little human pride had not, at first, come between him and the child of a strolling player. That pride now prompted him to do everything in his power to make his only son forget, as soon as possible, his past life ; forget that he had been held forth to the world as a dancing puppet, rewarded by coppers thrown into his little cap held out for the purpose, and been called the son of a broken-down buffoon. It was a strange way to accomplish that object by keeping him still closely associated with that buffoon's child, the companion of his degradation ; and for one moment pride made him hesitate.

But in that moment it was decided for him. Herr Lionet was a father, and his child was as dear to him as Von Ormond's was to him ; and he gave the Chevalier no time to speak. Taking the little girl by the hand, he

exclaimed, "Herr Baron, this child is mine, and not all the treasures of the earth could buy her from me!" Then, turning to her, he asked,—"Zephie, could you go with them and leave your poor papa? Without you, I must starve or beg!"

This was indeed a heavy blow to her little heart: it was death to her to stay, — poor child! — a death of which she little knew the full meaning; and her father must die of hunger if she did n't. Leon, however, positively refused to go without her; he stood with his little arms closely wound around her, sobbing and crying, but refusing to move a step from her.

At last the Chevalier proposed taking them both for a few days, with the idea that, among their little friends, the boy could be gradually drawn away from her without suspecting their motives, and thus this formal leave-taking would be avoided. He assured Lionet that he would do everything for the little girl's benefit as well as pleasure while she was with them, and promised to pay all the expenses of himself and François while they waited for her at the inn. To this the

father unwillingly consented ; but he feared to offend the Chevalier, for he felt keenly how completely he was in his power, — not only now, but whenever it might suit him to exert it.

Great was the rejoicing in the household of Herr Winter when “the poor little Bino” returned to them as the son of the distinguished Chevalier D’Ormond ; and their joy was not lessened that Zephie, the gay, brilliant Zephie, had accompanied him. Marie was in ecstasies at having known, within her own experience, just such a remarkable event as she had read of in story-books ; and Theodore was in a state of complete bewilderment, utterly unable to understand the case ; and when it was carefully explained to him, he stood stupefied with joy.

The happy father hardly knew how to show his love for his son and his gratitude for his restoration ; he gratified his least wish, and even watched anxiously his little face to read there what the wish was. The pale delicacy, though no longer sadness, of that face excited both his admiration and his most tender interest ; and he promised him that he should

immediately learn to read and write; and when the promise brought out a glad, bright smile, the father's innermost heart swelled with grateful thanksgiving, as it whispered: "I will praise Thee, O my God, while I have my breath." "Gracious art Thou and merciful."

But poor little Zephirine had a sad part to play that day. Heretofore she had always been the first, — admired, caressed, — not only the sister, but the little mother of her little Bino; the one to whom he turned in all his perplexities, to whom he clung in all his fears, to whom he looked for comfort in all his troubles; but now she was put aside. He loved her, she saw, as tenderly as ever, and treated her as affectionately; but she was no longer necessary to him. Now he had a father to guide and comfort him, a right to the society of the little playmates who amused him, — while she was indebted to kindness alone for being tolerated by either: she was too quick-witted not to see all this at once, as well as the plan for separating her from him.

Leon was a kind of hero, and of course all

interest was centred upon him. Everybody seemed taken up with watching what he did and said, and she was left alone by the hour. There was less and less play every day; nobody, especially, asked her now to dance, and the poor child had too few resources within herself to enjoy quiet and loneliness.

Marie could not give up her daily lessons at the school, or her daily tasks of sewing and knitting at home; and Zephirine must, through all that time, knit and sew too, or grow weary through idleness so foreign to her active nature. Even Leon seemed to neglect her; for, satisfied at having her with him, and seeing and talking to her whenever he liked, he preferred to pass the most of his time in playing with Theodore, or, when he was at school, walking about with his papa.

The poor child grew heart-sick, she hardly knew why, and yearned for her free, untrammelled life, her brilliant, fantastic dress, the excitement of dancing, and the applause of the people; and yet she never even thought of all this except as accompanied with Cherubino.

The kind-hearted Chevalier took her, with all the rest, to see everything of interest that the town could show, and had her very neatly dressed, that she might not feel mortified by the difference of her own appearance from theirs. This proper dress, and her elegance of manner and motion, made her a distinguished-looking person. But hers was the face now clouded with sadness; Leon's was as radiant as hers used to be. Poor Zephie! How bitterly she felt, now, the opinion respectable people entertained of her mode of life and profession; and yet she was among those who felt for her and treated her with sincere kindness.

One evening Leon had gone with his father to make a visit, Marie had been sent to visit her aunt, and Zephie sat alone in the room. Her heart ached, yet she hardly knew why. Suddenly she heard her name called from the street. She started up and ran to the window. By the light of the street-lamp she saw her father who held out his arms to her, and with a cry of joy she sprang from the balcony into them. He was her father, after all; and through her whole life she had

received from him but unbounded love and kindness.

With tears rolling down his cheeks, the old man held her to his heart. "My child! my darling child! They have not brought you back to me; they want to keep you and carry you away. Will you let them do it? Will you leave your poor old father all alone?"

"No, no!" replied the child, caressing him eagerly. "No, indeed I won't, papa; I will go and stay with you. Leon does n't want me any more: he has his own papa and rich friends now, plenty of them. Just wait one moment till I can tell them good-bye, and I will go with you."

She flew back into the house, tied together in a shawl all her treasures and clothes, and then ran in to Mamma Winter. "Mamma, dear Mamma Winter!" she exclaimed, with her usual earnest tenderness, "outside there stands my poor, old, own papa, and, oh, he is so lonely! I want to go back and stay with him; so give my best love to Bino and Marie;" and the child burst into tears. Frau Winter soothed her as well as she could, but

it was long before she could understand what she meant. When she did, she immediately sent out to invite Herr Lionet in.

While she was entertaining him, and putting up Zephie's possessions in a little more orderly fashion, Leon and his father returned. The Chevalier was not quite displeased when he heard of Zephie's determination; had he had a wife, he would have used every exertion to keep her, in the hope of making her all that she was evidently capable of becoming; but that he had not, and he feared the effect that might be produced upon her by the unrestrained expression of a domestic's feelings towards one so situated. He made the child a rich present, — far beyond her father's most sanguine hopes, — and extracted from Lionet a promise to pay more attention to her education, and see that she had the opportunity of learning such things as were suited to her situation in life.

But poor little Leon was not to be comforted when he found that she *would* go and leave him. It was long before they could be separated; but at last this was effected. Lionet lifted his little girl into the light car-

riage that the Chevalier had sent for to take her away, wrapped her carefully in the nice, warm cloak presented by Mamma Winter, and then drove her away, with the tiny, weeping face buried in her pocket-handkerchief.





## CHAPTER XII.

### THE SISTER.



**M**ORE than two years had passed ; and we will now turn our attention to a small, tasteful country villa, standing in the middle of a neat garden, and situated in one of the most lovely spots of the lovely Rhine country. In a small sitting-room that opened by sliding-doors of glass upon this garden, a pale, delicate boy was reclining upon a sofa, with his weary, heavy eyes fixed on the sunny garden-paths bordered by rich flower-beds in the highest cultivation. At his side a gentleman sat at a writing-table, who every now and then regarded him anxiously.

“ Shall we go and take a nice little walk now, Leon ? ” asked the gentleman, — for it

was the Chevalier D'Ormond with his child, — "see how pleasantly everything looks!" He spoke cheerfully, but it was a forced cheerfulness, for his heart was heavy.

"Oh, no," replied the boy, weariedly. "I am so tired, papa; and the sun makes me sick."

"Well, would you like, then, to look at the pretty new books that came this morning?"

"No, papa, I thank you; not yet quite; it makes my eyes tired to read or look at pictures."

"Does it, darling? Well, perhaps Otto will come and play with you," persisted the father, gently.

The boy seemed to shudder at the thought as he replied, — "Oh, I don't want him. He is so strong and rough, and talks so loudly." There was in his tone already the fretfulness of an invalid.

"Just wait then, Leon," the father again began. "We will soon be able to go to France again; there it is so nice and warm, you will soon get well."

The little fellow's eye rekindled, and he ex-

claimed, "Yes, yes, papa! and there we can look for Zephie!"

At this moment the housekeeper entered, in great indignation, to say that a little girl, evidently a beggar-child, was at the door, insisting upon seeing Master Leon, and would neither be coaxed nor driven away.

Unwillingly the Chevalier rose from his seat to go and see who it was, when, quickly as a lightning-flash, a slender, meagre little girl, somewhere about nine years old, sun-burnt, barefooted, and ragged, darted in behind the astonished woman, and with almost a shriek of joy, cried, "Bino! Bino! Dear, darling Bino!" In another moment the boy had thrown himself into her arms, and was sobbing and clinging convulsively to her.

"Oh, it is my own, dear Zephie! Oh, I'm so glad!" he at last found words to say, as he stroked down the rich black hair. And the joy and delight of the children, as, laughing and crying, they clung to each other and looked into each other's faces, extinguished the rising anger of the father. Again pride had, for the moment, overturned his better inner self.

"Are you sick, poor Bino?" asked the little girl, pityingly, stroking his pale cheek. "How pale you look!"

"Oh, no; I'm not sick," replied Leon, assuming indifference. "I have a little cough; but now you are come I shall soon be well; and then we are going to France. Are n't we, papa?"

The father nodded; his heart was too full to speak. But a new life seemed to be awakened in Leon: at once he started up and began to give his orders as if he were sole master of the house; and the father smiled through his tears to see his energy.

First, old Frau Lange, in spite of her astonishment at the reception given to the "beggar-girl" whom she had tried so determinedly to drive away, must bring some warm tea for "his Zephie," and everything nice to eat that she had in the house; then she must find her some nice clothes *immediately*, — a very hard task, for not a gown had old Frau Lange that was not a world too wide and too long for the tiny sprite. Frau Lange was a very fat old woman. At last some clothes were borrowed for her from a little girl in the

neighborhood ; Zephie was carried off to another room ; and when she returned nicely washed and neatly dressed, with the long, soft black hair braided about her head, Leon clapped his hands in delight ; and even the Chevalier looked in astonishment at the child's wonderful beauty and grace.

“ Oh, I can buy myself plenty of clothes,” said the little creature, with some pride hidden under a great deal of assumed indifference ; and at the same time she drew from her bosom a little purse filled with gold, and showed it to Leon.

“ Then why in the world did you come here so ragged, you foolish Zephie, when you had so much money ? ” demanded the boy in surprise.

“ Ah ! I hurried so to come to you, that I could n't stop to get anything,” replied the child. “ And, besides, I did n't want anybody to see the gold : they might very easily take it away from such a little girl as I am, you know.”

A sudden suspicion flashed through the Chevalier's mind ; and he demanded how she got there, and where she had come from, —

particularly whether her father had sent her to them.

“ Ah, no, Monsieur,” was the reply ; and the soft eyes filled with tears. “ My poor papa is dead ; he died one day a good while ago ; he fell down from his horse when he was trying to ride circus-fashion, like that fat disagreeable mamma that came back.”

“ Is that so ? ” said the Chevalier, pityingly. “ Well, my little girl, tell me now all that has happened since you went away. with your papa, and left us in Nuremberg.”

“ Yes, I ’ll do that,” said Zephie, readily. “ First we went to Munich ; there we were engaged in our business again, and I saw things so lovely ! so lovely ! But my heart was sick for Bino, and you know that with a sick heart it ’s dreadful to have to please and smile. Then papa took a young lady with him that used to sew for us, and wash, and sometimes teach me a little out of a book. She made the most beautiful flowers of wool, and so sometimes got a good deal of money for them. Then we went to other places ; and when we stayed long enough anywhere, papa sent me to the school. We got along

very nicely then for a good while, and had plenty to eat every day ; but all the time my heart was sick for Bino, and I could n't help it !

“ At last, one day, we went to a great, great big city — I forget its name — where there was a fair. There was a circus there, too, and papa took me to see them ride, — to show me what I should learn to do some of these days. If it had n't been for my heart-sickness, I dare say I should have liked it ; but I did n't much then. One big, fat woman kept riding round and round, and presently she stopped right in front of us, and looked at us very hard. Then papa cried out, ‘ Julia ! ’ and there it was the old mamma, — I mean the first one.”

“ What mamma ? ” asked the Chevalier, in some perplexity.

“ Why, the *old* one, that was with us before my own poor, dear mamma, and went off and left us. He thought she was n't alive any more ; but there she was, and another man was dead between, and she pretended to be so glad, oh, so glad to see papa.”

The Chevalier smiled at his own thoughts,

but said nothing, and the little girl went on with her story.

“ Well, so in the evening she came to see us ; and I must dance for her ; and then she pretended to be astonished again, and called me ‘ an angel.’ Oh, such wickedness ! to make believe she thought me a holy angel !

“ Before she went away she told papa that she would teach him to be a fine circus-rider. She stayed with us ever so long, and oh, she was so bad and wicked ! Oh, what naughty things she did ; and poor François ran away. If it had n’t been for poor papa, I would have gone too ; but she beat him like everything, and there was no one else to take his part. Sometimes she beat me too ; but I was thin and nimble, and she was too fat ; so I got away. One day she told papa that he must ride round the ring, for practice. He had a very, very stiff leg, but that did n’t matter to her : she made him get on her own vicious horse that everybody feared, and then sent a boy round to give the horse a cut across the hind-legs, that made him kick and plunge, and throw papa off. He was so much hurt

that they had to put him into bed; and at last he died.

“He was sick a very long while,” continued the little thing, with a quivering lip and trembling voice, “a very long while, and the fat mamma hardly ever came near him even to look at him; she was all the time having feasts and such things. But I stayed by him all the time, close to the bed, so that I could hear if he asked for anything. Before he died he gave me this little purse: it was very full, and he told me not to let them see or know about it, but he had been saving it up for me secretly for a long time. Dear, good papa! And he used to wear such ragged clothes himself, just to save his money for me. He told me, too, that I must not stay with them. He said he was going to write to the good Herr Winter, to ask him to put me where I could grow up a respectable girl, and live a more decent life than a circus-rider. He did n’t, though; he died too quick, and then the old horses drew him to the church-yard.”

For a time the child sobbed violently, and Leon with her; but again she went on:—

“ They did n’t send me away. They wanted me to stay and dance, that they might get money ; but I did n’t love any of them, and I was so lonely. And then my heart got sicker and sicker for Bino. So I just got into a wagon that was coming this way, and told them to bring me as far as they could. I knew where you lived, for, before François ran away, I used often to talk to him about you, and he told me all about it, and how to get here.

“ Well, the wagon brought me, oh, far, far ! but then it stopped ; that was the end of its journey. But I thought the rest of the way could n’t be long, so I determined to walk it. I set out ; but when I thought I was almost here, I was n’t anything like it ; so I went on and asked again. So I went and went, and asked and asked, oh, so many days, and at last I got here,— and here I am ! ” and again they were clasped in each other’s arms, laughing and crying for joy.

The Chevalier’s heart had now had time to act, and he could not send away the little friendless thing that had thrown herself so

trustingly upon his kindness. Independently of the new life with which her coming had seemed to inspire his drooping boy, he looked upon her as sent by the orphan's God to claim, at his hands, the protection and love that he would have longed to know were given to his own child, were their situations reversed.

Besides, his son was evidently sinking slowly to an early grave; might not this be God's righteous retribution? Might He not be taking his, because he had hesitated in playing a father's part to this other little homeless one, even when the unwearied and devoted love of all her little life for his lost one had given her a claim upon him? His pride was conquered, his duty was plain before him, and he looked upon the two children, so happy in their return to each other, and promised, with his heavenly Father's help, to be to this child, in her desolation, all that he would have wished another to be to his.

He immediately had a neat and becoming wardrobe prepared for her; and it was not long before her artless sweetness of temper,

and gentle, obliging manners, won every heart in the household. But her name was still an annoyance to him, and she readily consented to be called by any other he chose. Leon insisted upon naming her "Leonie"; and though at first she rather hesitated, lest it might be thought presumptuous, she was soon generally known as Leonie to everybody.

A happy life now dawned upon them, — the first *real* happiness even to Leon. It seemed Zephirine's whole thought and employment to do or to invent something for the gratification of her brother. He was never too much tired now to go into the garden, if she went with him; and when there, she found him seats in the most lovely spots, wove him wreaths of the richest and sweetest flowers, and planned a thousand gentle ways of entertaining him.

She must share his studies, too; and at one moment he heard with laughter her ignorant questions; the next, he listened with delight to the praises their teacher bestowed upon her almost unexampled progress. His books, his toys, everything seemed to have acquired new

interest when, in her soft, clear voice, she read aloud to him the first, and devised all manner of new ways of employing the last.

Her little bedroom adjoined the one in which Leon slept with his father; and many and many a night, when the fever and the cough would not allow the poor little boy to close his eyes, she would slip in, take his burning hand in hers, and with her low, sweet voice sing to him as she had done long ago, until he dropped into a quiet slumber. And when the poor father, anxious even in his sleep for his child, looked up at him half dreamingly as he lay, well might he fancy that he saw, sitting beside him, the guardian angel of whom he had so often spoken.

In the quiet hours of the morning and evening, if the wearied boy were at all able to rise, they studied together. Leon's father had given him a Bible of great beauty, filled with pictured representations of every remarkable event recorded in Scripture. It was now his turn to teach; and pleasant were the hours that he spent in showing and explaining these pictures to Leonie, and tell-

ing her the wonderful stories he had read there.

In the little girl's heart still lingered the memory of that baptism in the church, — the first time she had ever been in one, — and of the morning and evening prayers she had learned at Nuremberg. Whenever she found herself near the house of God, she longed to go into it, as into an old home, and she breathed many a prayer in her own little heart, though the words of those she had learned were all forgotten.

But Leon, in the peaceful repose of his home, in quiet communings with his own spirit, the constant society of his saddened father, and the frequent visits of the village pastor, had already become almost a citizen of that unknown world that so soon would be his eternal dwelling-place. The stories of the Bible were those he preferred to all others; and even they had for him new pleasure when Leonie raised her gentle but bright eyes to his and listened while he told her of ancient days, when God talked with men as a father with his children; how God, with his angels, had appeared to Abraham at the

door of his tent, and shown himself to Jacob in a dream at the foot of the heavenly ladder.

With beaming joy Leonie came to him each day, as he opened a new book, — for he had determined to show her but one a day, — and then began the story connected with it, to which she eagerly listened. Oh, it was so delightful! and the “little mother” of other hours became the attentive pupil of these.

When they came to the New Testament, to the story of how the Holy Saviour took the little children in his arms and blessed them, and how he promised to them and everybody else that really asked for it an eternal life after they had lost this one, and one not only eternal, but full of joy and happiness, Leonie’s eyes would fill with silent tears, and she would take her brother’s wasted hand in hers and hold it so tightly that it seemed as if she would hold it forever.

Child as she was, she was a woman in bitter experience, and her anxious eye noted but too well the daily wasting away of the loved form before her. The sick boy’s ir-

ritability and fretfulness she had entirely driven away ; the dear little sister, he thought, could do everything right, anticipate every wish. She was like a spirit of joy to the whole house, upon which her coming had brought the charm of repose and peace.

Christmas eve was at hand, and the Chevalier had purchased for his son all that love could think of or money procure. Indeed, ever since he had once more held him in his arms, his lost but now new-found darling, he had lavished upon him, at every return of this season, rich gifts in profusion ; but now, for the first time since the beginning of Frau Lange's reign, a Christmas-tree must blaze in the drawing-room.

The children sat together in darkness. Leon now passed nearly all his time upon the sofa ; and now he had been telling Leonie, for the twentieth time, the story of the Holy Saviour's birth, the singing of the angels, and the visit of the wise men. " Oh ! " exclaimed Leonie, starting up, " I am so glad the Holy Jesus was born in the stable. He will think most of the poorest children that have to sleep in such places, and wander about in the

world, just as we used to do, without having any beds to be born in. I do believe, Leon, that He has looked at us often and often when we were asleep in the wagon, and we never knew it!"

"So do I; and perhaps he said softly to Himself, — 'Those shall be my children too, one of these days,' " whispered Leon.

Just at that moment the door was thrown open, and a stream of light burst in upon the astonished children. Upon the table stood the beautiful tree, flaming with scores of wax tapers. Over it hovered a beautifully painted waxen angel, with golden wings; and both gazed in silent surprise for some moments; then Leon began softly to repeat the words of a carol Frau Lange had taught him.

But Leonie's exclamations, when she *could* speak, were loud and joyous. She was, indeed, richly remembered; for the Chevalier had learned to look upon her as if she were a guardian angel of his darling. A blue dress of fine, soft wool, such as she had admired on Marie Winter in Nuremberg, and nice little aprons, were but a part. The Chevalier's pride was conquered: the strength he had

asked so humbly had been given. There were neat tools, too, for their childish work, — for Leonie had become a right handy little maiden, — dolls and toys, too, and among them a pretty little tambourine. Oh, Monsieur D'Ormond, you are no longer ashamed of the little one who has done so much for yours! The little girl was once more the joyous, light-hearted Zephirine of other days; yet even then she at once laid down her own treasures to help Leon to gather and examine his, — taking them down for him one by one.

Clothing was not, of course, a suitable gift for a sick boy, when the object was to give him pleasure; but pictures, books, toys, and above all an elegant atlas, which seemed to delight him most, were there for him. Eagerly he sought upon his map for France, and then called, — “Papa! Oh, come and show me how we must go to get there.”

Leonie looked at him sadly, and her face, if not her lips, said, “Poor boy! you will soon go another way.”

The enjoyment of the Christmas-tree had made Leon very tired, and more and

more he needed to rest upon his sofa. But Leonie was always at hand to invent new occupations. One clear, sunny day his father wrapped him carefully up and took him in a sleigh for a short drive; but the cough returned so violently that the doctor forbade him to try it again.





## CHAPTER XIII.

### CONCLUSION.



**H**EAVILY and wearily the winter passed away, but March brought bright, clear days, when the soft spring breeze might be let into the sick-room; and, like a bird, Leonie sprang from the house to bring her brother the first flowers that bloomed. It was a most beautiful evening when she stood beside his bed, holding in her hand crocuses, snow-drops, and a tiny bunch of violets.

“Like Noah’s little dove with the olive-branch! is n’t she, papa?” asked Leon, with a faint smile.

“In France flowers come sooner; winter does not last so long there,” replied the father, who, busied with his own thoughts, had not heard the remark.

“Father,” said Leon, with a clearer voice than he had spoken in for some time, “I know very well that I shall never see France, but I am going to a country better than that, where there is never, *never* any winter. The good old pastor told me so.”

The father bent over him to hide his tears, but did not speak; and the boy asked, — “Where is Leonie? It is so dark, dear papa,” and his face was lighted up with a sweet smile. “Just think, if we had n’t gone into the church that day, we should n’t have found you. That was the way the Holy Saviour brought me to you. You and mamma gave me to Him, did n’t you? when I was a tiny bit of a baby, and was baptized, you know. Now you’ll always go to the church, won’t you, and think of me; and how happy we shall all be when we all get together again in paradise, and then in heaven!”

The father nodded silently, and the child called, “Leonie!” Leonie took his hand; it was cold. “Leonie, don’t you remember when the door flew open and you rushed into the room to me? And you have stayed with

us ever since ; have n't you ? Don't you remember ? ”

“ Yes, indeed,” whispered Leonie.

“ Then, Leonie, when I am in the dwellings of the blessed, and may see the Holy Saviour, I want the door to fly open again, and you rush in to me, and stay with us there forever and ever. Won't you ? ”

He did not hear what Leonie replied, however, for he put his arm round her neck and fell asleep, and never woke again.

It was again spring, and the most beautiful of the early flowers were growing upon the little boy's grave ; it was, indeed, an ever-blooming garden. Leonie tended it morning and night ; it was her favorite spot ; she came there as often as the father, who had long since taught her to call him hers. At first she came with quiet steps and burning tears ; but time brings peace ; and now her cheeks were once more rosy, her eye clear, her step light, and her sweet face, as before, lighted up by a winning smile. She was no more, to be sure, the old Zephirine, but she was the gentle, cheerful Leonie who

had made her young brother's last days so happy.

The Herr von Ormond saw all this with mingled joy and regret. He knew that the young heart cannot always mourn, but he did not wish her to forget Leon. "Leonie, my dear child," said he to her one day, "you know well that as long as I have a home it is yours too; but just now it must be a very mournful one to a young heart like yours. You are still a child, and with many things to learn, have many years, if God should spare you, to learn them in. They tell me that in Nuremberg you won for yourself great applause for your juvenile performances, and that you then enjoyed it very, very much. You shall never again, it is true, go wandering through the world as you did with your poor old father; but if you still feel as though you would prefer that kind of life to one more quiet, I will take you round among the large cities of our country, and have you taught all that is most beautiful and attractive in it; you shall have every advantage that money can procure, to place you at the head of your profession and raise you above

its worst temptations. You have understanding beyond your years. Between this and to-morrow morning think well over what I have said, and decide whether you will stay with me as you are, or return to your old, gay occupation. Nobly, dear little girl, have your devoted kindness and love for my dead boy rebuked the heartless selfishness that ever separated you. Humbly have I prayed for pardon; for once, at least, I will show that my heart is not all of stone."

Leonie thought, as her father had bidden her to do. All the brilliancy of the theatre as she had seen it in large and wealthy cities, — the exciting music, the showy scenery, all the witchery of that painted world, the stage, — all this came up before her, and her heart beat wildly as she thought to herself, — "And among these pleasures I can go with every advantage that money can procure, with every qualification to place me in advance of the most admired there, and a rich father to keep me there." But then there came up before her mind's eye another picture, — no, not another, many others; and when the day began to dawn upon the quiet earth she

sank into a gentle sleep. Pleasant dreams passed over her, and she rested as sweetly as if in her mother's arms ; for her resolution was taken, and the angel that bent over her was smiling with joy.

In the morning, as usual, with her father, she took her early walk to Leon's grave. Kneeling at his side as he seated himself on a green bank beside it, she took his hand, and looking up into his face, said softly, — "Do you remember, papa, what Leon said before he died ? Well, the pastor says the gate of paradise is always open ; so I must go through and stay there with him until we rise from the graves and ascend to heaven, just as I came that day through your gate, and stayed with him here until he went away. I don't know yet, dear papa, whether it was a sin to live as I did with my poor old father, or among the gay and finely dressed ladies of the theatre ; but I think it would make it a great deal harder to get to heaven to live that way. While I am dancing and listening and looking, I can't think much about going to the church and about the Holy Saviour ; so I think I would rather be quiet

and have a chance to think ; for that, you know, is part of the way to please God and get to the home of the blessed. I think I'll try, in peace and quietness, to find my way to Leon in his holy rest, just as I did to get to him in your house ; and the guardian angel will show me the way and take care of me, just as the dear God tells him to do. I'll just let all the dancing and fine clothes go, for I don't care as much for them as I did for Bino, and as I do for the blessed Saviour.

"But, if you please, I would like to go to Nuremberg and learn other things, only" — and with tearful eyes she sprang up and folded both her little arms round his neck — "only let me be your little child always : we are both all alone now !"

The father knew that the child of his adoption had chosen rightly and well, and he determined that it should be as she said. He took her to Nuremberg, where among her former friends she was received with the same old kindness and love, and many questions were asked her of Leon.

When the Chevalier D'Ormond returned to France, he took with him his devoted

little daughter, fast becoming an intelligent woman. Her life was religious and happy, and her love and attentions made his so too ; but never, amid her brightest joys, or in her most exalted position, did she forget the hour when, ragged, foot-sore, and weary, she had rushed into the presence of her long-sought brother, and found a blessed home.

THE END.





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